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Esquire

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

MAY 1994

HOW TO BE A MAN

BY HARRY STEIN

...And Get
the Girl

BY E. JEAN CARROLL

MIKE LUPICA
Where
Joe DiMaggio
Has Gone

ELIZABETH KAYE
Is QVC
Better Than
Phone Sex?

GREGORY JAYNES
Walking
Wounded:
The Gulf War
Syndrome

Plus:
A New
Short Story
by
DON DELILLO

Lyle Lovett:
A post-sensitive
archetype and Julia
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AIR MADA





Reality Check

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REUNION
M E N S W E A R

Deer's Profile

LEGACY FOR "do me" feminism? H ("Ten," by Tad Friend, February) I am forty-seven years old and have discovered that proactive sexual confidence has been the road to liberation for quite a few years. If women are more honest about their sexual interest, men will know where they stand and everyone will benefit. Men may be shocked at first, but they'll adapt when they see a good idea. They always do.

—KATHYNA HUNT
Seattle, Ore.

IF I would have chosen "a magazine editor in a towel jacket," I must have broken your heart that this was last.

YES, THAT'S ME (and some other women I know) in your February issue! We are women who believe that

women (good sex and work and respect are the only way to live). After being shocked for years for being so lookably retrograde as to think I could enjoy sexual attention and still expect to get respect in working situations, I've come to the conclusion that I should hard on, have fun, and do good work.

Still, given that you're talking about women who enjoy being both subject and object, looking and being looked at, doing and being done to, shouldn't you have called them "do you" feminists? I'm afraid you will haven't gotten past your own male gaze and inside there.

—JORDAN LEVIN
Miami Beach, Fla.

PLEASE INFORM the eight do me feminists whose collective blathering is supposedly representative of the twenty-first-century woman that equality between the sexes will be a shared only when men can take an interest.

—GUY SINCLAIR
Colum, N.C.

IN REFERENCE to your February article on do me feminism, my response is: What a bunch of crap! How is it that Esquire—one of the few magazines that "real" men, versus the Alan Alda type, can still enjoy—would devote almost an entire issue to a bunch of freshman free-

men who don't just wear our dicks but want to wear them? Tad Friend should have sold his article to *Womens World*!

—KEITH MASTERS
Phoenia, N.Y.

REGARDLESS of how hairy today's Renaissance, I do not think she walks around wanting to be "done." Why does a woman's voice in sex have to be passive? Your writers ought to be enlightened enough to know that sex is no longer dominated by something a man does to a woman. Do me feminism?

Yeah, you wish.
—BONNY WOLFORD
Tucson, Ore.



FEMINISTS SINCE the day you have championed sexual liberation, and the abortion-rights movement,

has always proclaimed that women's sexual, economic, and political freedom are inextricably linked. Do me feminism represents a continuation of a long tradition of sexual and political theory. Article claiming that feminism has suddenly changed only reinforces the notion that anti now feminism has been universally antiseptic or antisocial.

—JENNIFER WILCHIA AND
DAVID SMITH
Cambridge, Mass.

CONGRATULATIONS, Esquire! You have found those elusive, fictitious "feminists" who exist in the cesspool some men have put it to which "all they need is a good fuck" applies. As for the rest of us feminists, we'll just keep fighting to win a feminism that means equality through justice.

—ANNIE MCCOMBS
Durham, N.C.

I FOUND TAD FRIEND'S article appropriate for a magazine hoping to attract its own liberal male girls. Esquire correctly parallels this user-friendly feminism with attractive faces and enticing sound bites. After reading this article, what man wouldn't be able to say, "I support the ERA" and still watch the Super Bowl?

—AMY REIDWELL
Adrian, Ga.

Rebel Without Applause

FOR PART II, Joan Carroll presents H "The Future of American Womanhood" (February) as an antidote, spotted first from a weakly and very dysfunctional family? Worse, how could she allow herself to make such a negative impact on the fragile life of a child? Instead of ogling her subject's "crazy scene" in the dressing room, she should have been asking why an intelligent, attractive, privileged teenager has only two priorities in her life: outwitting her parents and self-destruction.

—LEE MARCHESKY
Bedford, Ohio

I AM HORRIBLY insulted by your assertion that Suzanne Jacobson is the "future of American womanhood." What on earth was your reason for her selection—her looking as if *Boy* dressed her every morning? At twenty years of age, I am a virgin and my parents are my best friends. To present a smug, professional, arrogant woman with no ambitions as the future of womanhood is a direct slap in the face to those of us who still hold that gender equality lies in professional success and financial independence, not a pack of cigarettes and a boyfriend who for reasons unknown is being run out of town.

—SALLY WHITNEY
Memphis, Tenn.

THE MOST ENCOURAGING insight into the life of Suzanne Jacobson is that her first impulse was to give her cigarette to the homeless. She was the homeless not as a problem but as a people.

—FRED CLOUD
Nashville, Tenn.

Oliver's Army

LIKE THE IRONIES of Oliver North's AIDE for the Senators lost on his Virginia appearance ("Disgraced," by Martha Sherrill, February)? Here's a man who chose to disregard the will of his country and then lied about it to the very body he now pretends to join.

—W. PATRICK SOUTHERN II
Morgantown, W. Va.

Letters to the editor should be mailed with your address and daytime phone number to: The Sound and the Fury, Esquire, c/o New York City Street, New York, N.Y. 10013. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

OBSSESSION for men



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BACKSTAGE WITH ESQUIRE



IN THE BEGINNING, men were narrative—specifically men who blundered their whole fall from grace through on the tube he was shivering up with. Then, say, around the late 1960s, we learned to be sensitive—to cry as we changed the occasional chapter, slave over a morning work, drink 'til. But that didn't work, either. Not only did women suspect we were taking it, we were. In fact, if the emergence of the sensitive man taught us anything at all, it was that guys will say or do whatever it takes to get a woman into bed.

To tap-dance on the grave of Mr. Sensitive, we called upon an old friend of the magazine's, **Barry Soria** ("The Post-Sensitive Man Is Coming," page 30). Informed, to many Esquire readers is the only fighter, Soria was the sensitive man. His Esquire column (for which he served two years of duty) was so legendary that when he abandoned it, a fan club popped up. **WHAT WOULD KAREY STEIN DO?** Taktika in tribute.

New Soria confirms that this so-called New Man was a lie, a mere media fabrication, who was destined to be killed off. "Women always appreciated candor and straightforwardness," says Soria, quite post-sensitively. "And people are made nervous by ambivalence. Ultimately it didn't work." The author of *Out of the Gays*, a chronicle of growing up male in America, and the novel *People*, Soria is at work on another novel.

So who is this post-sensitive man we are left with? To get to know him better, take a look at page 60, where the crutched *Spartan*—a dietician, former Esquire sexologist, and Michael Throckmorton and contributing editor Gay Martin, have put together a primer on his healthy ways.

In addition, contributing editor **E. Jean Carroll** profiles a (quasi)sensitized post-sensitive man, Lyle Lovett ("Guns Lovett," page 64). "Lyle ripped off my clothes," Carroll gushes. "Quasi-sensitively speaking, of course, at every turn in this story." As for Lovett's marriage to Julia Roberts, Carroll, who writes an advice column for *Elle*, believes "he is the perfect man—he's never at home. He's never at his wife's house." Speaking of her... Carroll thanks Lovett "for his love. It has a life of its own."

AFTER WATCHING COUNTLESS HOURS of *QVC* for several months, contributing editor **Donald Ray** believes the home-shopping channel is "the most American thing of all I would put *Domonique Hior* into a time capsule." ("The New Phone Sex," page 90). But Ray's got to understand "the dark side" of *QVC*, because, at the very least, "I have a shopping problem. I need a couple of hours in the day when the stores are closed." Ray is at work on a memoir.

The risk of Joe DiMaggio lives on more than fifty years after he hung up his spikes. Sporting Life columnist **Mike Lajtha** traveled down to spring training to meet up with the Clipper on the eve of his eightieth birthday ("The Eternal Yankee," page 51). "I don't think you interview Joe," says Lajtha, whose fourth novel, *Alleged Victim*, will be published later this year. "I believe you have a conversation with him and corner yourself lucky." For those who follow the cult of Lajtha, *Mike* recently left the New York *Daily News* to write a syndicated column for New York *Newsday*, which means *Los Angeles Times* and *Sporting News* readers can also enjoy watching him shoot from the lip.

Contributing editor **Gregory Jaynes** covered Operation Desert Storm from beginning to end for *Life* magazine. In "Willing Wounded" (page 70), Jaynes checks in on some of the war's forgotten casualties—those suffering from the mysterious illness known as Gulf War Syndrome. "There's quite a parallel to the victims of Agent Orange," Jaynes says. "The only way these soldiers can get help is if their own army marches against the Pentagon."

Don DeLillo has contributed fiction to Esquire since 1973, including an excerpt from his latest novel, *Man II* (which won the 1993 PEN/Faulkner Award), and two excerpts from *Libra* (which John Malkovich recently adapted and is directing for Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre). This month, DeLillo delivers a remarkable tale of a missing child and unambitious men in the South Bronx ("The Angel for Emeralds," page 100). "I'm vaguely aware that there was a billboard with the face of a murdered child some years ago," he says of his inspiration for the story. "Suddenly I realized it was wasting all the time to be rediscovered." ■

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Reality Check

Bylines

Luce Women



Time's Jim Gaines
Sassy up to 10?

GET NERD! If you want to impress Time magazine's managing editor, Jim Gaines. Earlier this year, Gaines gave a speech to the magazine's alumni, in which he decried the redesign and many of the changes implemented by his predecessor, Barry Maher. This landed him sources say, in hot water with the editor at chief.

James McManis

But the part of Gaines's speech that worked stiffest into a lather was a diatribe about the idiosyncratic writers who once made Time great, and a current oddball: a female writer who jogs to work each morning, "takes a shower in the ladies' room, and then—so I'm adding—stands there in the doorway looking at herself in the mirror and singing at the top of her lungs for several minutes before she puts on her clothes and starts to walk. And we love her! She's wonderful! Of course, she's the wife of the editor, but never mind. She's a what makes it all happen."

"I was wondering what qualifications Gaines looks for in writers," one female staffer notes, pointing out that he has been criticized for not hiring many female writers. She adds that no one seems to know the identity of this mysterious, naked

Finance

How Green Was My Network

WHEN ABC read up an million a year to keep **Diane Sawyer** from defecating on NBC, did the network also put aside a little cash to buy her good starts?

Diane Sawyer's colleague, **Dan Rather**, has been offering colleagues that ABC recently beat CBS out of a story by practicing "checkboxbook journalism." Rather and other CBS powers are flummoxed because they say ABC forked over more than \$100,000 to get the story of a twelve-year-old Lake Placid, New York, boy who killed a five-year-old. Rather spent more than two days "basically authorizing for the victim's family," says a source. "So when he lost out to ABC because they could pay me far more," ABC, however, it clearly eager to obtain good stories for the new Diane Sawyer-Brian Williams show, flummoxing him whenever the cost. "They were offering [unfolding live] and says to the Caribbees," says another source, "so the family could 'think about it' the offer."

"It's strictly against our policy," says an ABC spokeswoman. "It's just not true." Sure, but we paid good money for this story.



Rather tried

He Ain't a Heavy Liability, He's My Brother

Though most people had already declared **Roger Clemens** the right-hand brother to **Ally Carter** as *Point Break* co-star, they could have pointed out that there would emerge a surprise. **Willie's** body brother, **Wally Williams**, at *Wally's* reputation as a pro? You be the judge.

Roger Clemens

Age: 35

Mar: unemployed

Joked for co-star

in 1984

Additional liabilities: Offered songs in public, appeared in *Pamela's* had a *Blind* *Wing*

Usually liked to Joe Cocker

Early memory of *Point Break*: Took him along on dates

Education: Political science major, dropped out of *Hendrix College* in Arkansas

Favorite reading: *National Lampoon*, "I've been a big fan since I'm a kid"

Get Silver 1993 Dodge Stratus

Can't stop breaking the speed limit in Los Angeles

Dream: To act in a color commercial



Wally Williams

Age: 35

Mar: unemployed

Running for

Senate, but has no experience

Additional liabilities: Claimed his wife was "of Cuban descent"

Usually liked to Norma from *Cherry*

Early memory of *Point Break*: Wouldn't let him be the captain of their "spawpity"

Education: Former backup quarterback in *Proton* state

Favorite reading: *Stephen King*, *Sarris* at "too emotional"

Can't (his father's) 1997 maroon Cadillac (he says in *James* outside his apartment)

Dream: To look inside the White House

Fringe:



Newsday

It's a Too-Small World After All

THAT'S RIGHT: SEE do chief **Jeffrey Katzenberg** has been acting a little goofy lately in uncharacteristic. In recent months he has had to contend with

• **Dana Snel** writing him in the ovals

• **Robin Williams** calling him a cheapskate on TV

• **Robert De Niro** declaring that he "hates" him

• **Tim Burton** taking his talents to Warner Brothers

• The head of his gold-rimmed video division deserting to Fox

• Three kids getting killed while going to the *Progeny*

• **Andre** demanding answers of **Aladdin**

• Japanese investors bellowing about the chicken they'd financed

• A party ending Disney had swapped the idea for *Honey I Shrunk the Kid*

Now, in a recent conversation with a well-placed industry source, Katzenberg comes across as more than a little grumpy, and the word a little distant with his close friends, high concept flicks. A lot more.

With the newly acquired **Murphy** and **Joe Roth's** *Cosmo* studio figured in.

Disney expects to have as many as story features crowding the "pleasure" this year—nearly double the 1991 number. His strategy, says Katzenberg, is like *South Africa's* "We don't care who

owns the pipe, we want to control the bucking of."

Butter, who has reportedly been looking some "pipe" can prove—mainly CBS and ARC—remains to be persuaded. For all Katzenberg's bragging of the record revenues that the studio division racked up last year, the

• **Michael Ondaatje**

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All his professional life, Katzenberg's been a number two. More selling, still is that, despite Katzenberg's business success (mainly grants, awards, as that *Emmy's*, whose *Emmy Disney* is a disaster), he's not a member of Disney's board. Katzenberg, though, says, "I have never been happier. I have never been more excited. I have never had more fun."

Finally, there's the personal factor. Though Katzenberg still can't help himself from occasionally calling the chairman "Columbo," Katzenberg "Emmy's" is "Emmy's" characterizing his comparison as "a bunch of schmucks carrying around," or saying of *Milly* *Knapik*, "I wouldn't know him, if I did so on my face," he has truly been trying to mend his fractured ways. He's delegating more, especially to Joe Roth, to whom he's even granted an unprecedented twenty-five-picture green-lighting deal. All of which leaves Katzenberg with less to do and more time to say, damn. To compare, *Emmy's* recently had an idea for a movie that came to him in his sleep. Problem is, he only saw the title, but that was enough for him. A team of writers was told to "put on your thinking cap" and come up with a script to match his standard tale. *Emmy's* *Knapik* is now.

Michael Emerson will be so proud



The whispers are getting louder. Jeff.

overwhelming built from video and television—more where Katzenberg's apt has been relatively limited.

Such political lightning is not the first for the two, who've had spuds off in the years they've worked together, first at Paramount, then at Disney. Nevertheless, the logic of Katzenberg's leaving—particularly to be in charge of a full-on movie environment—wasn't at least subtle that sense

Man At His Best

EDITED BY ANITA LECLERC

ART

Dutch Master Pieces



IN THE early 1960s, when the Museum of Modern Art wanted to mount a retrospective of his work, Willem de Kooning turned the offer down. That sort of show, he said, was like a sausage, sticking up a career at either end and stamping the middle with the museum's brand name. He was right: In 1960 de Kooning was not at the end of his career but in the middle, at the height of his powers and reputation. That much is clear now that the artist, suffering from Alzheimer's but still painting, is at least the subject of a retrospective, opening May 8 at the National Gallery—a time for his sixtieth year. Of the seventy-one paintings, the ones that catch the eye are the series of late-1950s and early-1960s works de Kooning called landscapes. Far more than landscapes in any conventional sense, they were inspired, he said, by glimpses of reflections in mud puddles and sudden vistas on the highway near Montauk. Still so hot from their paint seems wet, they play off depth and surface, harmonizing soaring blues, singing yellows, and carnal pinks. Today they seem as exemplary of their time as David does of late-eighteenth-century France or Picasso of Paris in the 1920s.

When abstract painting was a strange, new idea, de Kooning pushed it into the mainstream. Jackson Pollock got more publicity for his frenzied and his finger, and Franz Kline, drinking at the Cedar Tavern, his hands as black as the brushwork girders of his canvases, seemed more profound. But if you had one dot in the encyclopedia, one space in the time capsule, for the New York School and abstract expressionism, you'd choose a de Kooning—*Over to the River*, *Secher in Haze*, or *Key-Pegged Above at Lower Point*—open and bold, painted with the sort of berishe de Kooning first used as a housepainter when he arrived here from the Netherlands at twenty-two.

—PAUL FATHON

Fresh paint:

Willem de Kooning's *Door to the River* (1960)

The Dirty Mind of Ellen DeGeneres

IN HER HBO special, *One Night Stand*, comedian Ellen DeGeneres was talking about stand-bye and she deeply held Californian conviction that taking your clothes off in the presence of strangers is the surest way to achieve complete physical relaxation. When some one in the audience volunteered that she, too, had had the mad-bath experience, DeGeneres responded from some corner of her brain best known only to herself: "Did you have to get on the goat and wig the thorne from *Shog*?"

It is this penchant for unsexed free association that persuaded ABC to give DeGeneres her own series. That *Fresh of Mind*, seemed in the we-rally-believe-in-you-as-you-better-not-show-up slot after *Hose Impassment*. Clearly, the network has bought into the Seinfeldian philosophy that all the world's a nightclub stage where a comic's riffs are turned into sacred melody by a talented ensemble cast. (In a standard drenched age, this self-conscious literacy seems to play just right—yaggle, fourth wall.) What drives DeGeneres's humor as a severely repressed outburst of everything, which she's calmed down since she was sixteen, when her parents divorced and she was suddenly moved from New Orleans to a small town in Texas. Archetypal DeGeneres stand-up line: "I was coming home from kindergarten—we'll, they told me it was kindergarten. I found out later I had been working in a factory for ten years. It's good for a kid to know how to make gloves."

For DeGeneres, prize time has its own pitfalls. In the past, *Then Morgan* (that would be DeGeneres) warns that her friend Holly is having a fling with a gentleman who, at the moment of sexual climax, has the unfortunate habit of



DeGeneres anxiety: One a good girl keep her reputation in a grown-up act show?

berking like a dog. Now, by Seinfeld standards, a barling orgasm is just a walk around the corner to buy a bagel, but Jerry is Jerry, and Ellen is, let's face it, a good girl from the South who was a little upset when it was suggested that this sort of sexual war, for her, out of character. In her horror at giving offense, DeGeneres can come across as a blond Mary Tyler Moore with an abandonment problem. "I have gentlemen who come to my comedy shows," she warms aloud to herself, "and I think they are going to watch my TV show. Anyway, they've told me they will!" —JOSEPH KROGER

The Hippest Hill in London

THE SWEDISH call people who live in Notting Hill Transfomers—a mixture of hip, black, and mainstream bohemians that captures the relaxed, well-lashed atmosphere of this part of west London. Notting Hill had a good light on and as the UK pulls out of recession, it's having an even better light on. It is now the capital's most fashionable place to live, eat, and drink. Creditability first came in the gray 1950s, when large numbers of West Indians arrived, brought color and excitement to the bars and clubs and founded the Notting Hill Carnival (first weekend in August), which has grown into the biggest street party in Europe. Half a million people flock here to watch the parade and dance the weekend away.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Notting Hill's bohemians

white stucco buildings were inhabited by the rich and stylish—David Hockney was a resident there, as was Martin Amis, and Richard Branson established the headquarters of Virgin in Ladbroke Grove. In the 1980s a younger media and fashion set made it their own. From Portobello Road to All Saints Road, they've established a network of bars, clubs, and restaurants that makes Notting Hill the epicenter of metropolitan chic.

WHERE TO EAT

122 (opp Kensington Park Road) This clubhouse of the 1960s crowd was recently and glamorously remodeled. Some of London's best chefs (Alastair Little, Rowley Leigh) have worked here, and the latest in the up-to-date succession is Col Felling, away on the dirt grid.

AFTER HOURS
SUBTERANIA (12 Acland Road) Actually under the motorway leading west out of the capital, Subterania offers night-time of classic club tunes from old soul to up-front house music.



BEACH BLANKET BARTLES

(at Ladbroke Road) It is impossible to miss—a giant statue of Zeus looms over the entrance—but the route alone can lead you to a kind of nirvana. This is the hangout of choice for musicians, models, actresses, and their various hangers-on.

FIRST FLOOR (190 Portobello Road) As you crutch over the public beach at its entrance, you realize this is a seriously delectable restaurant. Fishermen's food. Book a window table for Sunday lunch and have a grandstand view of Portobello Market.

WHAT TO BUY

PORTOBELLO ROAD This mile-long stretch of antique shops and stalls has been a bargain-hunting mecca for forty years. Picked on Saturdays, quieter on weekdays.

BOOKS FOR COOKS (at Blenheim Crescent) The best specialty bookshop in the city. Some of the top food writers in London do demos here, and you can pick up an inexpensive foodie lunch in the back room.

WHERE TO STAY

THE PORTOBELLO HOTEL (32 Stanley Gardens) Most London hotels are long on efficiency but short on character. Not this one. Small, relaxed, and hip, it is popular with the visiting film and pop-music crowds.

THE BALLOON HOTEL (41 Balham Park) This is a quietly grand brick mansion on the area's smartest road (Lancet Road is a neighbor). Saw chef Martin Richardson has transformed the hotel's dining room into one of the city's best.



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Welcome to the Club, Mr. O'Hara

JOHN O'HARRA'S trademarks were the telling detail [the peevish scowl "pounding her Delman heels on the Penn Station floor"], the dialogue [the precinct cop answering the phone, "Welcome I do fyat"], the sexual knowledginess that is still shocking fifty years later and the swift impact of endings that leave one with the sense that life goes on and the suggestion of just how these lives might

that regard utterly eluded O'Hara during his lifetime. Even as critical consensus was forming around the holy trinity of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner, O'Hara was forced to console himself with the conviction that posterity would bear him out. Now, more than twenty years after his death, O'Hara's claims will be measured with the Modern Library's repudiation this month of *Appointment in Samarra*, his novel about the half-mad gambler surrounding a self-destruction, and new editions scheduled

Few writers have so craved or deserved the highest honors and awards, but



Q&A: The novel, like *Lila* in the film, basks for respect.

of Butterfield 8, that speaks
nostalgic of voices, and of his
selected stories.

O'Hara turned out real literature that found a mass audience, selling more than twenty million copies in his lifetime. His aim—"I want to record the way people talked and thought and felt, and so

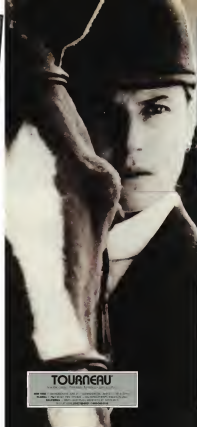
do a truly complex history and variety?"—was most American but left him open to the charge that he was merely performing a trick of recording. And it may have been easy to overlook O'Hara's remarkable achievement in his stories because he essentially created what became recognized as the New York story. There he published some 240 short stories that bristled with objects like those advertised on the very pages beside them, and the magazine has published more than a thousand stories like them.

But why exactly has O'Hara been excluded from the podium, or, as he very much saw it, the club? Well, the Nobel committee may have been disinclined to offer its prize to a writer who made a habit of lobbying in print. Also, though a Fordham Prep dropout from a Pennsylvania coal town, he was a terrible snob who imagined social conspiracy everywhere (Hemingway of

lured to take up a collection to send him to Yale.) O'Hara turned down an interview with *The New Yorker* because no editor, George Plimpton (H. Clara, Century, Ragged), had asked Hemingway first. He broke with *The New Yorker* when a reviewer ("It Should Be Bigger, Century") passed *A Ragged Life*. One still bears a luminescent (H. Clara, Century, Ragged) from his own publisher's glowing review his own O'Hara biography as a junior editor.

Until the day poetry finds him, John O'Hara will have to settle for these mostly turned-out Modern Library volumes. And if justice is served, it will find him, but maybe not too soon. Fran Lebowitz, ur-O'Hara, fan, professor of the new edition of *Apprenticeship*, and partner, ventures that O'Hara was such an asshole that his reputation can't be removed until everyone who ever knew him is dead.

—JAMES LINFILDE



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You Gonna Eat That?



NEW YORK chef Alex Tach tells a story of a hungry soldier who eats two potatoes, dreg the road and asks them for something to eat. The impoverished peasants say they have little enough for their own families, much less say food for strangers. The soldier says, "Well, how about I show you how to make a great same soup?" The peasants are awestruck and invite him to try. The soldier takes some onions, starts to boil them in water, then says, "You know, this would taste even better if we had some vegetables and a little meat."

Well, you know the rest of the story which Alex Tach has taken to heart at **Falito** 800 (5 West Twenty-fourth Street), where he serves a sumptuous soup full of boiled root and vegetables, with a meat sauce in the center of the bowl. Tach also cooks up a wonderfully hearty *hugy soups* ("hot hot"), a one-

Face meat: Amoretti's hot-tito has tongues wagging.

meal-salad. Picknastic version of *fofiche*—with garlic and anchovies crumbled in a puree and stirred in hot oil—into which you dip raw vegetables. As an appetizer, he serves a blood-orange vinaigrette with seared red snapper, a strong-tasting fish whose liver is considered a delicacy.

Tach's menu is a fine example of how many American chefs have turned away from both the dietary consequences of fusion cuisine and the clichés of "new food" in favor of very old ideas and traditions you thought only guys with mustaches like Vivaldi are after cleaning their fishnets.

This is what I call rustic cuisine, *cucina-rustica*'s grub made from sausage, sausage, root vegetables, and bold spices tossed into a pot, simmered, broiled, or grilled and served up with a moustache.

of fun. At New York's stylish new **Amoretti** (7 East Fifty-ninth Street) the *hugy soups*—made with beef tongue, capon, guinea chicken and a sauce of parsley, garlic, and olive oil—is among the most popular dishes on the menu. In Washington, Gerard Paradis of **Gerard's Place** (315 Fifteenth Street NW) does a port-au-fish with cured duck, and Jean-Louis Tallulah, known for his traffic-rich haute cuisine at Jean Louis, has been picking 'em up at his most rustic upstairs bistro, called **Falito** (3450 Virginia Avenue NW), where he serves a port-au-fish smothered with bone marrow, and a salad order of mouthfully rich French sausages and cheese.

Believe, rightly believe that the odder parts of sausage are the most flavorful, and for luscious veal cheeks in red wine prove the point. In fact, facial meats are all the rage at some of America's best restaurants. Rick Bayless of **Topolobampo** in Chicago (145 North Clark Street) smokes beef tongue, then serves it in a pickling brine shot through with jalapeños. Daniel Boulud of **Grand** in New York (40 East Seventy-sixth Street) serves crispfish on thin slices of veal tongue with persimmon. He also does a breathtaking meat tana with morsels of pig's fat, marrow, and wild mushrooms.

Such dishes are not for everyone. You've got to meet them head-on, drink lots of red wine, and truly believe that if you survive the night, you'll never again order lobster salad with white-truffle oil and baby burrows vomit in

It Couldn't Hurt

Matzo-ball soup has been credited with curing everything from the common cold to the wifflies, an epidemic of which hit Los Angeles residents after the quake did in January. As a result, sales of matzo-ball soup have shot up in Shakestyle restaurants, and not just in counter-top eateries like Canter's and the Broadway Deli but in posh dining rooms like Gardens at the Four Seasons Hotel in West Hollywood (where sales have increased by at least 50 percent), hip trattorias such as I Cugini in Santa Monica, and upscale spots like La Veranda in Beverly Hills.

"After the quake Los Angelenos seemed to go on a binge," says La Veranda's chef/owner David Slay, whose matzo-ball soup sells for \$5.25 a bowl. "I guess they figure they need something to soothe their battered souls. Who knows when the big one will hit?"

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Talking Smack with Jim Rome

As the proliferation of cable channels delivers ever more slender ends of the bell curve to the home screen, the audacious L.A. sports-radio sinner Jim Rome has come into nightly view on ESPN's grunge spin-off, ESPN2's *Romney*, as he is known on *Talk*, the new call-in and interview program, confuses ardent fan-boy callers and along with gonzo nerve and hard razz. The show, which launched with the network last October, has spawned a cult that had already rivaled the less audaciously inclined Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern in the world of southern-California radio.

First, novel to Rome-speak, a dulcet born of three years on the radio: hanging out, cataloging words who asked, and making sure that



Ace on the
Dance: When
on Rome
speaks as the
host does.

along those heads are begged but good with fun, not show. Talking smack is the central activity on both the radio show and the ESPN2 program. It

is sport, if you are willing to consider the live-for-nine twenty-nine-year-old an athlete. "Smack is everything," he says. "It's cockiness, it's

order, it's trash. It's bold statements that you attempt to back up."

Sometimes that means aggressive interrogation of guests—calling the good-natured Bears quarterback Jon Harbaugh "the owner's boy" ("Maybe it's harsh, but the guy was drafted over lost in the NFL, in passing, and he made five million bucks last year") or getting Ken Stabler to admit that he parted the night before throwing seven interceptions. Other times it's being attacked right back. Facing the return to work after a weekend of unrelaxed football playoff productions, Rome sighs: "That sound, they're doing right now," he says.

—NABARIEL WICE

A Roman Glossary

Becks: New York Knicks

Cash (long a sound): Money

Christie Everett: L.A. Rams QB Jim Everett

Cheer: A caller who imitates Kemosabe

Duck: L.A. Raiders

Fat farm: L.A. Clippers

Iris: Boston Celtic Robert Parish

Jfk: Jordan Basketball Association, "because Michael Jordan was never called for a foul"

Library book: Fan who has moved away from the team he roots for (and needs to be returned)

Milk carton: A player who's "missing," either absent or not performing

Premier: San Antonio Spur Dennis Rodman, who took a leave of absence last year after his wife left him

Scoreboard: The bottom line

Smack: Talk/razz

Tobacco: A caller able to wait on hold for an hour

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OUR MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Walter Shapiro

Trust or Consequences

The President reveals a thing or two about Whitewater, campaign promises, and the artful dodge

DO YOU LIKE HIM?" asked the White House official midway through dinner. I had been dodging this question for a year of writing this column and two years of covering Bill Clinton. Suddenly, it hovered over the Washington restaurant table like a deck of Ricky Jay's flying cards. Siskel-and-Ebert time, thumbs-up or thumbs-down. My dinner companion knew this I had recently interviewed Clinton, and he worried my personal verdict. But telling the truth wasn't easy, for while I shared governmental and political affections with Clinton true believers, I was not an adherent of their faith.

So I waffled, trying to construct a Clintonique five-part answer: "If your question is, 'Do I prefer him as president to any successful Republican?' then the answer is a definite 'no.' In possible silence from the other end of the table, 'I know if Clinton fails, I may never see another Democrat in the White House.' Not good enough. 'I approve of Clinton's domestic policies for the most part.' I was running out of verbal words. 'You know I feel positive toward Hillary.' A blank stare. 'But do I like Clinton personally?' An important nod. Finally, I blurted out my darkest secret: 'Do I like him? Not really.'

MY NUMBER HAD FINALLY COME UP a few days earlier I had been granted a short-notice slot on the President's schedule originally reserved for a TV interview that had to be postponed when Clinton developed a monilegic eye infection. Like a guerrilla army, *Esquire's* Washington bureau prides itself on its ability to travel light, so I arrived alone in the Oval Office for my name a memo with the President, actual with just note book, pen, and pocket tape recorder. Armed against me was the full weight of the modern presidency. Along with Clin-

ton, six other people were in the room at the outset: camera operators, director Mark Gormin, a press secretary, personal aide Andrew Friendly, a camera operator from *White House* TV, a presidential photographer, and an official photographer with her own boom microphone. Pretending to carry on a normal conversation while surrounded by this menagerie was akin (I'm speculating) to filming a love scene on a movie set. (Gormin later explained that the TV technicians and photographer were there for the historical record, no doubt for the special Shapiro Wing at the Clinton Presidential Library.)

From the moment I walked into the Oval Office, I felt like a contestant on *Just the Click*, keenly aware that every frivolous digression, every malodorous query, represented time that could not be recovered. I sat perched on a sofa, with the President in one of the hard-backed yellow chairs normally reserved for visiting heads of state. "One of the things I want to do before I get out of this job," Clinton pompously confided, "is to give the president two comfortable chairs to ease world leaders' Aaaaah, bells immediately went off in my brain—why is he telling me that in this just presidential recall trial? Or is Clinton subconsciously signaling that he fears his time is short?"

That kind of frenetic overanalysis is one of the pitfalls of a presidential interview. One sit-one session to Clinton is so limited that the compulsion to scoop up every table



Oval Office confabulation: Clinton and Shapiro spent forty-three minutes during their argument to argument in a heated attempt to come up with a straight answer.

series is daunting. (Mine was one of just four print interviews he granted in February.) My forty-three minutes with the President chased no telling confessions and not a hint of the fabled Clinton insider. Good knows I tried, at one point asking, "Do you sometimes look around the Cabinet room and say, 'Thank God Bobby Ray Inman isn't secretary of defense?' Clinton just sat there impassively with his legs crossed and his hands folded neatly in his lap and softly replied, "Well, I think that Bill Perry is doing a good job. I think it was a good decision."

From there, the interview was a crash course in the art of presidential obfuscation. Clinton was simultaneously cordial and wary, his answers so carefully selected by his custom Fitzgibbon Children's Defense Fund staffers that, instead, and argument was there for a reason, the political calculus behind Clinton's answers is likely more revealing than anything he actually said. So here is an Enquirer decoder to help interpret some of Clinton's more intriguing comments.

He hides Henry Thompson aside: "Sometimes I forget that a joke cracked by a president has a longer half-life than a joke cracked by a governor. A joke cracked by a president keeps popping up over and over again. It's almost like trying to get rid of a worm." *W*

The sensitive date: "When I was governor... I would take [Clinton] to school. Of course, I can't do that anymore. But she's probably reading an age where she wouldn't want me to do it anyway—it probably wouldn't be cool. I guess one would have taken that away from us even if I hadn't changed my work." *W*

Replaying his Billywood charade: "I probably average two movies a month, maybe three. A lot of times we'll work until 2:00 or 2:30 Friday night, and I'll gather up whoever's hanging around [and] call up some of the kids here in town. I know [what] moved here from other places and invite them by the movie. We'll have between ten and thirty-five people, and we'll watch whatever happens to be here." *W*

The quest for self-control: "I'm trying to be more disciplined about interspersing serious books with cynicism. Because otherwise, I'll read five or six

systems for every serious book I read. That's not good."

And even more self-betterment: "I wish I had known even more about the Balkans than I did before I became President... although I've done quite a bit of reading and learning about it since then. And I wish I had known more about exactly how to allocate time and resources out of this office. But I think this year you will see that we all learned some things, and I think we'll do a better job this year than we did last year."

FROM THE OUTSIDE: Law the interview is a way to explore my lingering, hard-to-define unease with Clinton as a person and as a leader. The old-fashioned political term "a runner" sprang to mind when I think of Clinton. It's not his intelligence or goals that trouble me—it's his personality. To my mind, Whitewater began less as a traditional Washington scandal and more as a metaphor for the Zelig-like nature of Clinton's persona. Gradually taking over the track in Arkansas is the nation's least-handed way to get at the larger question: Who is this guy, really?

It's not just me. Clinton came to the White House with a dash in credibility gap and, as with Lyndon Johnson, a number of laudable women soon came to crack it. In the polls, the President regularly scores below 50 percent on whether the public trusts him to keep his promises. In a CBS survey in mid-February, women were asked whether "Clinton says what he really believes most of the time or... what he thinks people want to hear." The results suggest an entrenched problem. Nearly two thirds (65 percent) responded that Clinton doesn't "what people want to hear."

I predicted Clinton to explain the public perception that he hadn't kept his promises. His four-part answer can be deconstructed as a classic example of Clinton's series of consciousness style, which dances from argument to argument in hopes that one of them will satisfy "People don't think politicians keep their promises anymore," Clinton began. "There's a lot of cynicism out there." He moved into a defensive whine about the "huge publicity" that had surrounded his campaign pledges about gays in the military and the middle-class tax cut.

Then the President tried a historical smoke screen: "Abraham Lincoln's major promise is the first inaugural was not to free the slaves but to limit slavery. Franklin Roosevelt's major promise was to balance the budget." He ended with this ready-for-revelation boast: "I think the middle class is better off with low interest rates and a lower deficit."

These days, every reporter has to ask Clinton about Whitewater to prove his moxie. It's an initiation, not unlike shooting up a housing project to get in to a first-class steer. I had no illusions that I could freeze any Whitewater questions so artfully that Clinton would suddenly shoot like a winner, cracking under cross-examination by Perry Mason. "It wasn't me, I swear. It was all Hillary," I tested, my aim was to prod Clinton into talking about the political and media dimensions of the sad Whitewater mess.

Q: Let's return to the trust issue. What are your doubts about why the press continues to stick with Whitewater day after day?

A: I have no earthly idea.

Q: But you must have thought about it.

A: I have, but I'm at a loss to explain it. I have been amazed by the feeding frenzy around it and the whole trust thing. I think part of it is the presumption—maybe rooted in past experience with past presidents—that the president has always done something that justifies removing him from office and that the president's a liar. Nothing you do really counts unless you find something bad about the president.

There is a legitimate point here: Clinton's role models as serious Democratic presidents thrived in the era before Vietnam and Watergate crossed the dramatic adversarial relationship between the White House and the press. But when I spoke with him, Clinton was not in a reflective mood; he felt compelled to turn his answers into a series of wounded innocence. Okay, I will grant him this: "I'll bet you a million dollars has been spent trying to prove the instead of \$60,000, I lost \$50,000 [in Whitewater], neither of which would constitute a violation of federal or state law, criminal or civil." But I drew the line when Clinton started parading the "classroom scenario" of Washington with the far-fetched

sometimes we TEST way off course and sometimes we make a small, yet telling turn, the kind that ends up searing a little more intense into our everyday lives: the Remington and the Harrington classic American form that's finally rounded the corner.

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OUR MAN IN THE WHITE ROOSE

atmosphere of Arkansas, where "even your enemies didn't thank you were dishonest." Hadn't this man ever heard of Cliff Jackson?

The more we talked about trust, the less I trusted Clinton. This was not a blinding realization, far more of the President's comments was egregiously duplicitous. But the package is too polished-perfect for my taste—a slick course with all the rough edges studiously smoothed. Maybe this is what it takes to govern successfully in the 1990s as a minority President representing a party synonymous with a quarter century of failure. Clinton hasn't learned as the female for president, but he's challenged "the idea that my predecessors have all been thoroughly forthright and obvious about everything they said and did."

I certainly hold no brief for paper shredders in high places, but I still doubt that a vice sector is buried at the bottom of Whitewater or in Vince Foster's pants. That said, the White House has done everything possible, short of leaving a trail of bloody footprints, to create an atmosphere of profound glib. The explanation is more like profound incompetence; I'm guessing, but I wonder if, even now, Clinton understands how high the table stakes have become over Whitewater. Several times I have been amazed by blue-ribbon Clinton sources that there is nothing in the mysterious Whitewater file, save for innocuous details and contacts. I assure my sources are telling the truth, but I do worry about a day when the dissembling in which A had to B, then B spun C, and C seriously passed on what he heard to me (such double dealing, if it exists, can poison an entire administration).

That is my president's most prized possession: It is the glue that holds his administration together, the bond that connects him to the voters. Toward the end of our interview, Clinton struggled to summarize his own feelings about Whitewater and trust. "I just have to try to keep working through it. I mean, I just have to keep trying to reach through and work with it... It's a strange thing."

And it just keeps getting stranger...

White Shopper: Expect White House computer data, sent regularly in this space.

Even as a kid, I hated restrictions. "Todd's quite a handful," my teachers would say. I had them climbing the walls. Who knew twenty years later I'd be climbing a few walls myself.

— Todd Clinton, Rock Climber



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stanley Bing

Hello, You Must Be Going

In which we offer a spirited defense of America's firing practices

YOUR HONOR, it's a great pleasure to appear here today before the court of public opinion. As you know, in the course of my job, I am routinely asked to justify, if not defend, the way we as a corporation, and American business in general, desert the people we feel are no longer up to the challenges of the tasks that lie before them.

Now? Dear Sir, Your Honor: It's a new word around here. It means... well, the opposite of worst. Your Honor: In plain English? How we fire people. That, Your Honor, on the face of it, the manner and terms under which folks are fired might seem, to the untrained eye, to evince no rhyme, reason, or even common humanity. Nothing could be further from the truth. The enormous importance that seems to rear up like agonized moles on the skin of the civilized world, in fact, is the great serviceable way we expunge those who can no longer cut, shape, package, or distribute the material.

I have adorned a range of examples for Your Honor, each of which might make the faint of heart grow apoplectic. And I believe that when we're done, Your Honor and the array of pairs of pants in attendance here today will agree that in each case a form of real but very real justice was served.

Perhaps most palatable are the firings in Class C: those done in anger or, in my event, simply and for no apparent reason.

Case no. 146, with exhibits dated before you, is a perfect illustration. In 1981, Alan Kausner was awarded the Regional General Manager of the Year Award at my company's We Are Quality retreat at the Scottsdale Princess. "Alan represents the kind of leader we want to grow in this company," said the president of the business unit. A week later your only way getting a cap of double-strength coffee at the corporate mess hall. We all said to drink it that

way. Now we all drink decaf. But that's beside the point. Where was I Oh, yes "You hear about Kausner?" and Lafferty, a mutual friend-president then in vogue. "He was canned yesterday."

"That whelp?" I cried. "We gave him an award last week!" "Guy really didn't have his shit together, I hear," said Lafferty. And that was that. This meant that my single episode conveyed to this illustrious court, crucial truth in all forms of narration: enterprise. Anybody can be blown away at any time, it would better watch your

golden ass. Paydon my French, Your Honor. The individual who teaches this lesson well, and early, owes his or her teacher enormous thanks and certainly has earned no score based on life, sappy notions of decency, as I'm sure Your Honor would agree.

That said, let's move on to Class A: firings done with acumen, genuine humanity, and brains. Consider case no. 145 on your honor chair, which pertains to a gentleman by the name of Ross Moss, the head of a rather substantial engineering firm. As he lay review with the company in store for a week-end, he was, however, was nonetheless given a raise and a new contract. "We know the business has many competitive issues, Ross," he was told, "but we think you've got a handle on 'em." The very next morning a dispute, reported called to tell him something astonishing—that he was about to be fired. This fanned the fellow had picked up the night before at a cocktail party from someone who ought to know—the guy who was about to do the firing. Did he have a comment? No, he didn't. Dazed and confused, he emerged from his office to find his successor already on the floor, doing a friendly "Hi-yo, howdy-doo!" walk-through. Five minutes later, his phone rang. "Come up to my office, Ross," said his boss. "There's something I want to see about." He went. He was gone. And he was.

Kind? Perhaps not. But the message sent to the organization, Your Honor, is irrefutable! And so... true! He who comes up his, in some deep and inaccessible sense, has his right to be treated with common decency and professional respect. Why? Because business is business—it's not some frothing with in the park! The punishment for failure is not only death but humiliation! So you'd better succeed—or else!

Now, if there are no more questions, I'll move on to Class 5: firings accomplished in a less-than-honest fashion. What am I talking about, Your Honor? Guys who are laid on and then fired. It happens a lot. And there are very good reasons for it. May I proceed?



Thank you. I refer you to case no. 473—a superficially and rare that single produce storage among less sophisticated business. It concerns a fellow we'll call Kirk, for that is not his name. Kirk lived in one of those West Coast cities where people role play to business meetings. As the general manager of a large distribution concern, Kirk made a lot of money, had a lot of power, and used both of them well. Married, two kids, approaching forty years of age. Life was good, as it is for many in the prime of their earning career. One day Kirk's shop was purchased by a new concern, headquartered in the gray, industrial, mysterious East Cleveland, to be exact. When he heard the news, Kirk hopped onto the horn and spoke to his own owners. "I'm about to buy a house," he said. "I know what happens when new guys come to a place, and I just wanted to know whether I should put a down payment on this place or let it slide. Level with me." The Clevelanders replied at once: "Go, Kirk," they said, "you're our guy. Don't worry. In fact, one of the reasons we bought this place was because we wanted to acquire your management expertise. Go ahead. Put your roots down, fella." Kirk put down six poems on his dream house and finished the deal. Two weeks later, he was fired, by phone call, and given twenty-four hours to pack up his stuff and get out. Since he was at his job three years, he got a full month of severance pay.

Cold? Indignant? Maybe. Indelible? Not at all. Four hours. The business, as any other, needs constant, unquipped management attention. It had to be run and run well between the time the purchase was announced and the day the sales closing took place, didn't it? What kind of performance could management expect with a senior guy in place who knew he was about to get canned? But, that's what! And is there any greater value in business than after, raw performance? Shouldn't that be? If so, I'd like to hear that position articulated to the shareholders, securities analysts, and assorted observers who keep a keen eye on our operations, Your Honor?

Yes, I suppose you're right. They could have given him a bit more money. Your Honor: But they didn't and quite right, too.

Why?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Because... well... sales are rules, that's it! The process is the process, and no man is bigger than the process, and once you're part of that process, why should you be treated any differently than your company neighbor? What respect can the smallest among us feel for our business associates if they do not give the appearance of fairness to big and small alike?

Did I say the appearance of fairness? No, no. Your Honor: Of course I mean fully fairness, not simply the appearance of it, and my point is that it's important. Fairness, I mean. Give me a minute to get myself in order here.

Right. Now. This brings us to the last series of cases, which, you know, illustrate this fairness concept really well. I think I believe I have them right here. Yes. Class 4: Firings of very important people who never have to work again because they walk away with a life. It is no, by the way, the case of Godfrey, reportedly the most aggressive and overreached senior manager his corporation had enjoyed in decades, a man who allowed costs to spiral during a time when revenues were decreasing underranked by 10 to 20 percent a year. When it came time for Godfrey to go, he was called in by the chairman of the firm, given twelve minutes to make a new list of wage, pension benefits, and somewhere near three years' severance. Keep his car, too. And his condo in Naples, Florida... and... well... before we wrangle with that one, Your Honor, allow me to group with it case no. 413. Besser, removed from his post as editor of a major book-publishing company after the place had fished in book revenues and stature, who walked away with \$1 million in cash, a lifetime pension, and...

And then there's case no. 1093, the former chairman of a corporation well known to most Americans. After several years under his watchful eye, the stock of this company plummeted by 75 percent, whose divestitures were made that destroyed the customer base, and investment in legitimate businesses withered while unrelated debt increased in exponential, almost vast fashion, leaving the company nothing to show for its losses but a tremendous, crushing and gaudy for the foreseeable future. Invited to move on, at long last, by a finally aroused

board, the gentleman in question walked home with several million dollars cash in his pocket, all his club memberships intact, his cars, stock options, and a stipend of nearly half a million dollars per annum, for life. For life, mind you.

There are a number of excellent explanations, not for these quite ordinary occurrences, Your Honor, beyond the obvious, cynical one suggested by common sense, or, I mean by basic parties, which is that executives would save another these kinds of packages out of self-interest, because they would like the same treatment when they go. As I said, that is not so. Not so, Your Honor: There are many better explanations that come to mind here on this... such as... like, for instance...

Give me a minute, Your Honor. I know I had an argument here someplace.

What do you mean, I haven't lived up to my responsibilities? It's not easy to produce sophisticated arguments like these! I'm doing the best I can! If you think somebody else can do it better, why don't you try to find him?

What do you mean, I'm fired, Your Honor?

What do you mean, you're holding me up to any great standard?

What do you mean, I'm receiving one week of severance per year of employment because that's the policy?

What do you mean, my stuff's in a box in the hallway?

What about loyalty? What about my years of dedicated service? What about honor?

Okay. Fine. If you think you can get away with this, you've got another thing coming. You've got another thing coming. You've got another thing coming. Your Honor: I'm getting an attorney. I'm over forty. I'm in a protected class. I have a bad leg. You haven't heard the last of me!

What do you mean, I can't have my severance unless I sign a release indemnifying the court against further legal action?

Where do I sign?

Give me the money.

Buy. Let's a bitch when there's nobody to protest the workman's...

Stanley Bing is a career-hungry clerk of Eugene, Ore. Garry Shandling is a one-in-paperback (Shirley Shandling).



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THE SPORTING LIFE

Mike Lupica

The Eternal Yankee

The answer to the famous question is very simple: Joe DiMaggio hasn't gone anywhere.

IT IS ANOTHER AFTERNOON in the sun for Joe DiMaggio, one more in a lifetime of sunny days. Old ballplayers, some of them famous once, move stiffly about the grassy infield at Fort Lauderdale Stadium, throwing, hitting, and jogging. They seem quite happy to see one another, happy to have another baseball afternoon to themselves. Every few minutes, they stop to look into the dugout where he sits. DiMaggio, now in his own elegant twilight, is dressed in a navy blazer, gray slacks, and a red tie with a full knot. He looks as if he has just come from church.

"Let me tell you a story about left field," he says. His smile is a bridge back to the 1950s, a bright, hot Sunday long ago. He was trying to hit home runs over the left field wall in Yankee Stadium, which was once like crying to his baseballs over the Carroll Mountain. "I hit Joe balls that day every one over four hundred feet," he says. "Every one of them an out." He smiles again. "It had happened to me once or twice before, that this was a very hot day, and by this last one, I was not very happy at all."

DiMaggio was never one to show emotion when he played. (It was huge news when he kicked the dirt in the 1951 World Series after a spectacular catch by Al Green of the Dodgers.) On that Sunday after another out to left, he stormed off the field and kicked the first thing he came to a huge one filled with ice that was sitting next to the dugout. The ice flew all over the place, and

some of it landed on Joe McCarthy the Yankees' manager. "He looked at me and said, 'What the hell do you drink you're doing?'" DiMaggio says. "My face was killing me, but I wasn't going to let him know that. I still wasn't in a very good mood, so I did something I shouldn't have."

He ducked his head, still embarrassed fifty years later by his loss of poise. "I carried out Joe McCarthy." The digout was silent. DiMaggio took a seat down the bench. Everyone wanted to see what would happen. McCarthy got up and walked down the line of players. He was known for many things—World Series championships and an ability to drink with the best of them—but the Yankees manager was never known for a sunny disposition. "I was just worried you might have hurt your foot, Joe," he said. Then he turned and walked away. DiMaggio shakes his head all these years later. "That was quite a moment," he says.

THERE WERE SEASONS in the late '40s and early '50s when the young Joe DiMaggio felt he could have hit many home runs if he had played anywhere except Yankee Stadium. Back then, a right-handed batter could drive a baseball also far to left-center and still have nothing to show for it in the field. DiMaggio was so degree the old men say you had to see him with your own eyes to understand. I was born the year after he retired, but I've always felt I know him as well as any great athlete I have seen—from Willie Mays to Michael Jordan—because I saw the great DiMaggio through the eyes of men who had my grandfather, my father, my uncles.

A line of people has formed on the field now, waiting for him to conclude his story. They come down the steps with caps and baseballs, pieces of paper for DiMaggio to sign. His is probably the most valuable autograph in the world.



The Clipper's latest: "Left field was never my friend," says DiMaggio, immortalized in Harvey Kessel's *The Wide Swing*, 1956.

THE SPORTING LIFE

A top hands him a baseball. "I met you one time when I was stationed in Germany," he says.

A father pushes his young son forward. DiMaggio looks at the boy and signs his ball. "I'll have you a lot of room," he says. "Maybe you can get your favorite player to sign this someday."

Hands and voices and things reach out to him. You can see DiMaggio shrink back into his church clothes, onto a corner of the dugout near the scoreboard.

"Just a few more," he says.

There will be no news on this day, no news from his past. I heard about this charity game DiMaggio was hosting to benefit a children's hospital in Hollywood, Florida, the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Memorial. I drove an hour to the ball park on the chance that I could spend some time with him. He will be eighty this November.

"What were we talking about?" he asks.

"McCarthy," I say.

"He didn't say very much, you know. He wasn't like these young managers today who have to be psychologists too. He would hold court at night. We'd play a game in the afternoon in Chicago or somewhere, and then you'd walk into the hotel lobby after dinner. McCarthy would be there, smoking a big cigar. They'd set up chairs around him. If one of the younger players wanted to say something or just listen, they knew they could find him in the lobby. That was their best chance to talk to their manager. Isn't that something?"

Low Burdette, the old Braves pitcher, comes over to say hello, and DiMaggio greets him. Burdette is a young Yankee farmhand at the end of DiMaggio's career. They speak for a few minutes and Burdette goes to join the other players around the batting cage. DiMaggio returns to his story.

"I loved being at the stadium," he says. "I always got there early and I was never in a rush to leave. We played afternoon games. When the game was over, I took my taxi. Why rush into the night? I used to sit in a room with Pete Skoway, our legendary Yankee clubhouse man, who went all the way back to Babe Ruth and smoke cigarettes and have a few beers and

wine until everybody was gone. Sometimes we'd still be there two and three hours after the game. It would get as quiet as a church.

"I always loved that time of day at Yankee Stadium."

Before Joe DiMaggio stepped onto the Yankee dugout on that day, before the afternoon suddenly shifted, tilted toward him, I asked Ron Swoboda, one of the unlikely heroes of the '66 World Series, why DiMaggio was different from all the other steroid men.

"Very simple," he told me. "Joe DiMaggio is what you get when you build integrity on top of greatness."

There is no integrity in sports these days. We demand to know everything about athletes, even before they are truly great. DiMaggio is different because we gave him room. We let him be.

"I played one season too many," he says. There is a tone in his voice that is almost wistful. It seems to say: Even I stayed around too long. "I had myself a pretty good season in 1950, you know—after being injured the way I was in '49. I came back pretty good and the wear and tear wasn't too bad the next year, so I said to myself, 'You've got one more in you.' I told the Yankees I'd be back on in a couple of spring training, and I knew I'd make a mistake. I hadn't listened to my body. It was telling me that I was through."

Because of his age, there are times when his voice seems tired. This is not one of them. DiMaggio points a finger at me for emphasis.

"I roughed it out," he says. "I played the year I made a commitment to the Yankees, and I lived with it."

He is no more. He has never asked to be a hero. But DiMaggio has earned something with his throughout his playing career, throughout his public life. It is called grace. Even when he sold Mr. Coffee machines or appeared in advertisements for a New York bank, you had no sense that he had cheapened himself, traded in some essential piece of his dignity.

He has never written a slick autobiography. He has never sat down with Barbara Walters. He has just been DiMaggio, and now somehow he is going to be eighty years old. It makes you wonder: Will Michael Jordan be like this

in fifty years? Will another athlete have this kind of run in public life? If that does not happen, it will be because we do not back off and let them be.

"I asked Joe to sign a baseball once," Swoboda says, "and he indulged me. He signed his name, and then above it I had him write, 'I haven't gone anywhere.' Someday, if I ever meet Paul Simon, I'm going to have him sign his name and then write, 'Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?'"

He spends most of his time in south Florida, but he still gets home to San Francisco every once in a while. He lends his name to good causes. In a few days, DiMaggio will travel to another part of Florida for the opening of a Ted Williams museum. He makes appearances and signs autographs, and all this time later, but is the most magical name in baseball.

He has not gone anywhere. He seems to be a little more relaxed in public now, a little more open to the cheers. We have allowed him, in the last innings, to make a wonderful living just being Joe DiMaggio. And he is again as hard as steel.

It is an hour before game time. DiMaggio will welcome people to Fenway's Loderdale Stadium soon, say a few words, and graciously accept another cheer. There is a new wave of people pressing toward him. He greets the first few, then decides he has signed the famous name enough for one day.

"Excuse me," he says. "I've got to disappear now."

He stands up slowly. You can see the athletes grab at him.

He will go back to the sanctity of the clubhouse, part of it that in the '50s when it was his and broke Pete Skoway back there with cigarettes and beers, DiMaggio feeling no urgency to rush onto the field.

"See you, Joe D.," Burdette yells. DiMaggio finds him in the crowd of players and wives. Then he turns and walks down the steps, moving into the shadows with all those memories. Out on the field, the old ballplayers run too slowly and laugh too loudly. When they hit the ball, it really does not go anywhere.

Mike Lupica writes syndicated columns for *Newsday* and is a regular on ESPN's *The Sports Reporters*.



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The Post-Sensitive Man Is Coming! The Post-Sensitive Man Is Coming!

(And boy is he pissed.)

By Harry Stein

OFFENSIVE? ME? When she first said it, I waited for her to smile. *Me?* I was a certifiable good guy, with years of clippings to prove it! Hell, the author of a column called *Ethics!* let bere was this female editor across the table from me at lunch—someone from whom I badly wanted work—going on and on about a passage from an autobiographical essay I'd written that hadn't even been published yet.

The passage was about a longtime fantasy of mine: that whatever woman I was seeing might turn into clay for, say, ten minutes, so I could do some quick revisions—round out the

belated a bit, transfer a little something from the legs to the chest, maybe smooth out a bump on the nose. Not, I added concomitantly, that the idea didn't produce its share of *anxiety*: given my artistic skills, there was every chance I'd use up my allotted time and find her body grotesquely out of balance and her face permanently deformed.

"So," sneered the editor, "since you're obviously into objectifying women, what are you? An *art* man?"

"Of course not," I lied. "Look, I know it sounds adolescent. But I was just, you know, trying to be honest about the way men look at these things. Isn't that supposed to be what we want—honesty?" I offered my most ingratiating smile. "It was also supposed to be funny."

"I don't think for a second that's how most men look at things anymore," she shot a glance at the other guy at the table, an associate of hers. "Not in my experience."

Naturally, the guy kept his mouth shut—until, that is, half an hour later, when she went off to the ladies' room.

"Tough times, huh?" he suddenly observed.

"What do you mean?"

"I'd guess you're not gonna have much fun when that thing comes out. Women don't seem real interested in the truth about guys."

I hesitated, could this guy be trusted? "Well, I see your point. I've got a lot of respect for her."

"Oh absolutely Mr. no." He paused. "You get a look at her from behind?"

"Uh, not really."

He smiled. "Do. You'll see why she's so sensitive."

The spirit of 38-34-36 Seinfeld, Lemkau, and Stern have arranged the corpse of Mr. Sensitive and given men the freedom to be guys again.



Being someone, at the passage noted above will indicate, who tends to sit put his gun in place, I'm situated to admit how long it takes me to report that episode. Then again, until just about now, there's likely have been almost no one willing to print it. The story starts in time for a full generation, men have been willing cohorts in a screwy bit of social engineering, the fabrication of a more sensitive, vibrant, giving, playful species of male. The term "New Man" now may ring as quaintly archaic as "teenie man," but the ambiguity he represents remains too much with us. Even as women themselves have taken to anointing as the too sensitive man, avoiding about his feelings as the drop of a bell, many remain just as ready to condemn men as Neanderthals for the crime of simply thriving and living in men always have.

It is only now that it is significant numbers men are moving to challenge such a formalism. Suddenly among guys across the social spectrum, there is a growing recognition that this business of allowing women to dictate the terms in the ongoing exchange between the sexes has been a disaster, that with the exception of family therapists and divorce lawyers, it has been good for no one, that, finally, the big lie that we're something other than what we are [even if it's more sensitive, more decent, better] has inevitably only contributed to the vast slip pile of misunderstanding and hostility between the sexes.

Why now? Men may be fairly intimidated, but when the walls start tumbling down around us, it eventually catches our eye. Who could've guessed in the days of *Play to Win* and *Meat* that the world would up with a world where to be male is nothing less than to be suspect, one in which all kinds of pernicious nonsense gets seriously discussed—from the notion that all men are potential rapists to the belief that *Midnight and Shakespeare* weren't really such her boys after all? Who could've imagined that seemingly reasonable women would one day go around high fiving in the streets after the acquittal of a woman who'd cut off her husband's penis, taking the verdict not merely as one horrific wrong having occurred, another bit of poetic justice itself?

Call our human with words backward, call it pathetic, but these words are the rules of the game we signed up for. But, absolutely, thoughtful guys otherwise that their loss, too, have been enriched by the breakdown in traditional rules. They'll tell you they have zero interest in sharing a life with a woman who's anything but a peer or in reviving the idea of the office as an old-boy preserve.

Yes, all at once, you'll hear the same guys saying things they'd scarcely have been caught thinking a few years ago. I have a friend who, having suddenly right out of college and married, now finds himself doing for the first time in more than twenty years "I used to be," he observes, "like you didn't die, you were dead." And when the drugs were off the next morning if you could still remember the woman's name, you had a relationship. Today they all expect you to remember their name. "He always," "Does that sound sweet?"

"Well—you know what? I spent most of the last twenty years trying to smile the right, enlightened sounds, and there were times I was so convincing, I believed what I was saying."

All at once, even the most politically timid of mainstream magazines are worrying less about making the right, enlightened sounds. "Women deliciously masturbate and expect men's natural sexual attraction to the female body, and then deny the responsibility and prosecute men for the attraction—if the attraction derives in the wrong man," writes Louise Murray in *Time*. "Women cannot for long combine fiery indignation and continuing passivity [assuming to have the best of both those worlds]."

But the best evidence in popular culture that a male has finally been driven through the New Man's fraudulent heart is the best-seller list. For months, across the world of new-fiction—looking down on books about new-fiction experiences and the hidden life of dogs—stood a duo who, reluctant as some of us may be to elect them as our own, have achieved astonishing heights of popularity largely because they've thumbed their noses at literature's stridently. Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern. Both men, though they dispute each other, both profess actually to love women. It's just that they do to the old-fashioned way.

Some militant feminists oppose further such amnesty for the opposite sex that they want to criminalize the process of courtship. . . . Limbaugh writes in his latest best-seller, "I have news for these people. It's resentment for these men to pursue women."

Indeed, if we're casting about for endorsement pages of the new mood, the best-selling author to focus on is the one with whom so many more of us readily identify—Jerry Seinfeld. For he, too, in his way, has less credibility to a personal style that comes to lots of us guys as second nature, one defined by prevailing orthodoxy (at least when handled with less charm) as pure face evidence of world prevarication.

Almost instantly lovable, whereas so many find Limbaugh and Stern utterly alien and alienating, Seinfeld nonetheless shares with them an unembarrassed acknowledgment of what might be called the sexual awkwardness. He—both the real Seinfeld and his TV character—knows how it really is between the sexes. Which is why he knows that when a guy is interested in a woman, he is quite apt not to conform to some abstract ideal of desirable sensitivity—not unless such a pose is apt to produce results. This is a guy who, on his sitcom, takes a woman out several times without being able to remember her name, or, more precisely, manages to recall only that it rhymes with some uncomfortable female body part. A guy who continues to date another woman so dumb that he forgets whenever she talks only because—though he knows that it's wrong, the sex is so great. A guy who makes a bet with his friend that he can get a woman on television by masturbating the lingerie—well, since one of those friends is a woman (reads that the tale longer odds).

A tale can surely be made that Seinfeld is least guys

used to the latter-day exposure of women. He doesn't go out of his way to offend. These guys, that's just another way of saying he feels free to be himself only around his friends. Like most of us.

THE REAL QUESTION is, where did that other guy, that mythical man, reflecting the life experience of almost no one, come from? Whatever got anyone thinking that this is the way guys are—or should be? Why, for a while there, did that notion enjoy such currency that now, even with evidence in abundance, countless guys still feel bound to approach the opposite sex with Seinfeldian wit and calculation?

The guy answer—the one most guys will offer—is the obvious one. It's what we thought women would. After all, this new, improved man—communicative and nonconfrontative, wise enough both to support women as they assumed their place in the world and to happily compensate for their absence at home, basically a woman with a penis—definitely wasn't any guy's invention. Making his first past appearance around the time most Americans went just beginning to learn of the feminist revolt, this current being was, within a few years, shown in the faces of positively servicable men everywhere as an ideal. THEN MEN I ADMIRE AS TRUE LIBERATORS, on the headline of an interview with Gloria Steinem in 1993 in which she went on to tell off names such as Bobby Kennedy, John Kennedy Galbraith, Swedish premier Olof Palme, and Boris Yeltsin's husband, Martin Irem, who could compete? Who wanted to?

So here's the ugly truth. We let it happen. Why? Because we couldn't be bothered to argue. Because it seemed just another variation on a status-quo issue, and we told it in Seinfeld's way, never girls. And we weren't men's a class, nor even a sex, but a caste in fine print. It Movement theory and an oppressed caste it that, like Unacceptable, sort of. I was immediately impressed. It understood. . . . But then came passed and so did first impressions. Sex like Seinfeld—was that was one of the things that drew me to him—then it began to seem that he was downright weird about them. He appeared to have about forty-seven girlfriends a month.

We were, in brief, entering the put-up-and-shut-up phase. No more fun and games for guys. Men like the emotional equivalent of brand and water. Women were like it looked like the public was just with us men but with the women's ideas as.

But soon men—at least those of us in the major media capsule—had little trouble following along. Eager to meet women on their own terms and assume our place in the new social order, we were ready to jilted guys, in retrospect (and in theory), to all manner of misinterpretations—emotional, moral, intellectual. All we wanted was to be told we were okay.

The poster boy of the movement, of course, was Alan Alda—who, incidentally, was able to interpret nearly identical headlines in *Newsweek* (SHE PELLETS THUNDER FIERY) and the *New York Times Magazine* (SHE CUT FINGERBATH PLEAT) the old thing, looking back, because he'd said so much in the past in brief form that this was his mission. In retrospect, it's just amazing how straightforward it all was. In a fairly elaborate search of the literature, the very first reference I

find to something called the "New Man" is in January 1968 in *Males* magazine, a publication that just a month earlier had run a caustic piece titled "A Girl's Guide to Men-on-the-Make." Yet here's that New American Man, described as "a child of the times"—a wonderful contrast to his early alienated and selfishly defined predecessors. Respected to process, among other highly needed qualities, a remarkable capacity "to relate to [women] in any way," he believes "the actual revolution means only one thing, that the ultimate in human communication—sexual intercourse—can take place unencumbered by guilt and other hang-ups."

That! The piece also has men as prime examples of the new species. Among them, insignificantly enough, is future ABC correspondent Jiff Greenfield. "Oh, yes," also Greenfield correspondent, "did I make a total of 'Cops'?" In fact, he did not, noting simply that the ideal women "should have the same qualities as a man—only be softer, and a little rounder." The same cannot be said for most of the others. "Once a girl is able to deal with male-dominated relationships," as one characteristically put it, "then she's ready to accept any amount of abuse."

It did not take women all that long to begin realizing that was something other than a great deal. By the early Seventies, almost every women's magazine was regularly running pieces applauding the liberalized male, offering the reader instruction on how to spot him on her own. Only now there was an occasional cautionary note. With one for friends, *Males* magazine, April '73, "I knew a man who had the line down put an accomplished Marlon, with the gift of leaders like that Movement arrives so often here, he could talk fluently for hours about Women's Liberation without making even the remotest slip. [All females over the age of twelve were women in Seinfeld's past, never girls. And we weren't men's a class, nor even a sex, but a caste in fine print. It Movement theory and an oppressed caste it that, like Unacceptable, sort of. I was immediately impressed. It understood. . . . But then came passed and so did first impressions. Sex like Seinfeld—was that was one of the things that drew me to him—then it began to seem that he was downright weird about them. He appeared to have about forty-seven girlfriends a month.]"

We were, in brief, entering the put-up-and-shut-up phase. No more fun and games for guys. Men like the emotional equivalent of brand and water. Women were like it looked like the public was just with us men but with the women's ideas as.

But soon men—at least those of us in the major media capsule—had little trouble following along. Eager to meet women on their own terms and assume our place in the new social order, we were ready to jilted guys, in retrospect (and in theory), to all manner of misinterpretations—emotional, moral, intellectual. All we wanted was to be told we were okay.

The poster boy of the movement, of course, was Alan Alda—who, incidentally, was able to interpret nearly identical headlines in *Newsweek* (SHE PELLETS THUNDER FIERY) and the *New York Times Magazine* (SHE CUT FINGERBATH PLEAT) the old thing, looking back, because he'd said so much in the past in brief form that this was his mission. In retrospect, it's just amazing how straightforward it all was. In a fairly elaborate search of the literature, the very first reference I

Never Mind How I'm Feeling, Just Pass the Mac 'n' Cheese

You, too, can transition into the post-sensitive archetype!

First there was

the sensitive male pillar, the sensitive American Male. Then, slowly but surely, we became bored with his love of bowling and incessant grilling of meat. So we decided to kill him. By the mid-1970s, men knew that other skills were required—like listening, sharing, and erogenous command. The Sensitive Male was introduced as a whole, but by the late Eighties *MSM* "S" was well out of synch. Right now, we're proud to herald a new era, one in which it is okay to be an American man! Call this new breed the Post-Sensitive Male.

How can we detect this shocking prisoner? For starters, Jerry, **Tuckerhead**, and many young suits are way up. Karl Oshes confesses he eats Kraft macaroni and cheese just because he "likes it." Easy—be of flesh like the poster fame—in now a valiant attempt and a contributor to the Republican National Committee. Even Bill Gates has hooked under and married a gal from the office. Who's his next new, delicate, is an essential, no-brainer—be the man, lady, for the war between the sexes, *Access 977*, and washed potatoes in fancy restaurants. If you follow our post-sensitive handbook, we guarantee that within thirty days you will be surrounded by unbreakable babes and paying more taxes than ever before.

Today's post-sensitive celebrity pantheon



James Garville
Lyke Lovett
Václav Havel
David Caruso
Martin Amis
Beate Wellstein
Harvey Keitel
David Letterman

Post-sensitive issues

How retro is too retro?

Is this outcast great species or disaster?

Is life war?

Okay for your mistress to lunch with your wife?



Post-sensitive afflictions

Eastern religion
Modernism
Tuberculosis

Ross Meyer Moss
Beefing

Now classical music

Early American furniture

The *Fifties* (TV version)



Literary post-sensitive men

Cyrano de Bergerac
Papageno
Henry V
Robinson Crusoe
Huckle Finn
Moby
Minderbinder
Pig Bedtime



Clare Quilty
Holden Caulfield
Arno Stride

Post-Sensitive Man Dos and Don'ts

Do:

1. Casually refer to yourself by your own ethnic stereotype
2. Talk knowingly about pornography
3. Hold doors for women
4. Convert your great-aunt's 162 lumps to a low rider
5. Occasionally shave your head but let your sideburns grow then let it all grow back



Don't:

1. Ever go anywhere "dutch"
2. Wear sandals of any kind
3. Scratch your nubs in mixed company
4. Root for any team in the AFC
5. Whip out your flip phone to impress a date



Crucial Distinctions

Insensitive male

Market capitalism
Steven Muller
Working the ribs
Indiana
Nuclear Secrecy
Manhattan
Will
Raytheon

Buffalo chicken wings
Ginseng
Bob Finkelwood
Ed Turner
"U.S."
Wide life

Aggravation
Brought guys
Old Spice
Tom Snyder
Martin Davis
Prohibition
Date rape

Sensitive male

Music
postmodernism
David Leavitt
Deep service
Eugene, Oregon
Class theory
Angled Life
Huge
Nose

Duck-venison pizza
Mylar-glass diving
Bob Kerrey
Fence Bryson
"Up"
No tie, shirt buttoned to top

Partis
Gay guys
Maoism
Phil Donahue
Richard Branson
Gutside
Fashionable impotence

Post-sensitive male

Logical postivism
Nicholas Baker
Pickup basketball
New Orleans
KFC's B&B
Gold
Shag
McClain
Communication
Meat feed

Almondade
Bob Dole
Barry White
"No"
Museum sex

Archie
Lebanese
Street
Hosni/William
Dell Gates
Detroit
Being considerate enough to come first



Post-sensitive men throughout the ages

Ulysses
Rasputin
King Edward VII
Pablo Picasso
Frank Lloyd Wright



Field Marshal
Erwin
Kessel
Oskar
Schindler
Lee Ahrader

Insensitive men who could become post-sensitive men if they would just change their hair



Frank Sinatra
Eddie Van Halen
David Garth
Mort Janklow

Sensitive men left high and dry in the cultural backwash

Sting
Phil Collins
Paul Simon
David Dinkins
Ed Begley Jr.
Judd Hirsch
Dustin Hoffman

Insensitive men who seamlessly transitioned into the post-sensitive mode

Clint Eastwood
David Gergen
Tommy Lee
John

Sensitive and insensitive men trying their damndest to transition into the post-sensitive mode



Jesse Jackson
Denny Diamond
Mike Tyson
Barry Diller
Everybody in Aeromax

Men who are hiding the fact that they can't transition into the post-sensitive mode

Adriah Ames
Mortimer
Zuckerman
The Moss



Arnold
Schwarzenegger
Jeff Gilkey

[continued from page 93] they have it" as he good homonymously smug in his lack of "it." But if you consider how abnormal their behavior is, then you are led to the hypothesis that almost all men are suffering from monstrous poorness. "Tossing someone poisoning is particularly cruel because as authors usually don't know they have it. In fact, when they are most under its sway they believe they are at their healthiest and most attractive. They even give each other models for exhibiting the most advanced symptoms of the illness."

As usual, the women's magazines were on top of things, not only alerting readers to the revised definition of the quality male, but offering tips on getting those at home to get another. HOW TO MAKE YOUR MAN MORE SENSITIVE [The Ladies' Home Journal] WHY MEN CAN'T TALK ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS [McCall's], WHAT MAKES A WOMAN'S MAN [Vogue]. And this in *Glamour* typically without the market lure of money I LOVE TO SEE A GROWN MAN CRY.

In hindsight, what we were seeing is the popular women's magazines were less an evolution in thinking than faithful thinking of a slightly different order. If mass culture means anything, the kind of men women were most drawn to had never changed much at all. Aida's own Hawkeye Pierce was a classic warrior, more masculine of females than Scatfield or his war-torn brother and Sam Malone, his more beloved English counterpart [and never mind the off-camera politics of his later ego, Ted Danson], was made to say literally anything to get a good-looking woman into bed.

Yet, also, plenty of men did cry at least in print. And where. And endlessly self-analytic. WHY I—AND MANY MEN, I ORES—AM SCARED TO LET A WOMAN KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE, one miserable wreck confined in *Glamour* in exchange for a paycheck.

Then again, how many of us who were magazine-writing for a living back then are without still my own low secret case when I see such self-analysis—*Glamour*!—to produce a piece on how guys feel about having female bosses. Doubtless I interviewed a sampling of guys and howled in the results, including the fact that at least a couple were far from wild about their bosses, finding them more interesting than the men under whom they'd worked. My editor requested that I rewrite those parts.

"But this is what I found," I argued. "It seems to be the truth."

My well, it wasn't the truth they were looking for—and I went ahead and made the changes. No big deal, I reasoned myself, the staff they're paying me to content, but it goes down again and is basically harassment—this isn't version of poster production.

Hey, I worried that paycheck, too. Hardly incidentally, by now even the men's magazines were starting to come around—mainly *Esquire*. By the late Seventies, as former *Esquire* editor Lee Rosenburg put it, this magazine was becoming "someplace where men were uniquely comfortable writing about their emotional selves." As a close observer of all that, I can attest to the overall sincerity of the effort, but also, I've got to tell you, to the distinction between the tone of each of what appeared on these pages and the one we used with one another when there were no women around.

Personally even then I felt embarrassed whenever I

heard my own columns in the magazine. Either, infused of a sensitive guy kind of thing. Never having so much as taken an ethics course in college, I'd accused the magazine only when assumed I could go for laughs, like, against Eisenberg. "Just throw in an ethical point at the end; we'll call you *Shady Spinoza*."

The closest word directly to what I was starting to feel to republish about the new male confessional style: the impatience at its core, the sense that prior to this generation, men had never been capable of sensitivity or emotional depth. It seemed to me, on the basis of what I'd picked up in thirty odd years and less of real movies, that most of our forebears expressed shame through play, but in the way that came naturally, by indirection and implication, with enough humor around to keep things interesting and (if necessary) provide durability later on.

In short, my growing sense was that this New Man stuff wasn't to be longed after, for as men failed to measure up to successive species ideals, female frustration and hostility steadily escalated.

Such a view was also partly the result of changed personal circumstances. I'd recently married, and though my wife considered herself a feminist, having grown up with three brothers and an economic scholar father, she was remarkably tolerant of human, even male, nature. Her view—and who was I not to accept my own—was that too many women (though in the real world, far from most) insist on seeing the emptiness of a glass four-fifths full, that the majority must most persistently ascribe to meanness, insensitivity, aggression, childlike behavior—were born of the same genetic and historic material responsible for confidence, focus, drive, humor; that, quite simply, even at our most disappointing, we were...okay.

Then too, as in countless other homes, the coming of kids had turned all the placid-seeming rhetoric on its head. Our first child was a girl, when a boy came three years later, we simply took it for granted he'd play with her dolls. Instead, by one and a half he was daily moaning through the doll chair for the lone tennis ball at the bottom. More than that, he was already revealing himself as the oddest combination of bravado and vulnerability: someone who'd swagger around for hours, as self-confident as any overprivileged athlete. But if something went wrong, he'd instantly drop the facade and go to pieces. In other words, he was like so many other little boys we knew. And—no specifics here—more than a few men. Partly by the thought of his having to go through life apologetic for this, mostly with a man, culpa every time he failed to head the slightest of prevailing nerves, was almost too much to bear.

It was this realization, above all, that persuaded me to write the essay to which this female reader took such sharp exception. Its tone was the same: one I sensed for it. In the *Esquire* column—intuitive and amusing with a sardonic subtext. If the point was really, who the hell wanted the strangled criticism of the New York Times Magazine's About Men column?

Yet that's precisely what so irritated the female editor about the piece—in absence of apology. After all, in literary and journalistic circles, About Men was widely taken as authentic marketplace. While neither, in my early years, was being circulated in publications everywhere, its

constructive voice spread by whole legions of actual men trying to show themselves to advantage before actual women. If nothing else, About Men was consensual. Whether the subject was the Meeting of Marbush, Men Fixing Dirty Diapers, or Men at War, it was always about the same thing: "the general infirmity of men," as writer Mike Kelly puts it, "and the willingness of the specific [male] author to admit that infirmity, making him appear all right."

A case can be made that About Men was even more brutally sworn than the skin magazine, which found these values endearing fascination at the very moment they were contradicting punk to its better than. Playboy was one thing; at least *Playboy* had a history of social activism. But now, for instance, even *Playboy* was on the bourgeoisie. Suddenly this became its spin on the promise of diaper freshness, apparently not uncommon among its readers. "Even in this age of female liberation, the pressures on men in our society are immense—to perform, to succeed, to 'score' with women, to hold up an image that is stylish and usually leads to an early demise. Who needs it? An ever-growing number of red-blooded males are turning on to the ultimate escape from such pressure: *bodybuilding*."

Finally, of course, it all became just too much. Women called it first. They were exasperated with this false man—although, typically, their own sort of responsibility for his creation rarely got factored in. As the latest wave of super-macho mag had it, we were in the age of the wimp. Women were sick of the graying and the self-analysis. "These days, my ideal guy's Tarzan," wrote up a female screenwriter I knew.

"He doesn't complain about his condescension feelings. He doesn't complain about work. He doesn't complain at all."

This one around the circles went about four of comment and male impotence and why men won't grow up. *Glamour* was now wondering (the sexual-harassment phase was still a few off), was now's men more manly, or not?

One female, at least, took things a bit further. In her book *Men of Men* and in a subsequent *Time* magazine piece, Barbara Ehrenreich looked back at one of the very real consequences of the revised ideal: a pei-will fight by men from what had been traditionally left to male responsibilities to women, family, and the world at large. How could it be otherwise when the New Men, "in a marked reversal of the old masculinity, is concerned that people find him, not for his power or strength, but genuine, open, and sincere?"

The point was that in this new, self-congratulatory age, few men were able to recognize that in crucial ways the preoccupation with "personal growth" in fact served to diminish them. For inevitably it undermined what, in a quarter age, were known as the manly virtues: *Prudence*, *Responsibility*, *Character*.

Things were reaching a critical mass. Then the most puzzling of men, among more and enjoying at less, could sense that there had to be a change. In the short term (with a

prominent assist from New Man extraordinaire Bill Moyers and the ever-sensitive PBS), this meant Robert Ely and the mythological movement.

In retrospect, there was probably more going in the men's movement than most of us got up to by the close-heating and the nakedness of it all—were ready to allow that there was just no way something like this was going to stick. Embarrassment is as powerful a deterrent to most guys as financial ruin and war, in this case, a lot easier to avoid.

But it was the ground hoisting at the dream beaches and the happy-go-lucky that it was by the women's movement, that helped encourage the current mood of a truly authentic male voice, one far less hesitant to say many of the things that come naturally to male hearts and minds.

This is not to say that all the years have left us untouched. The messages purveyed by the popular media have unquestionably had some important salutary effects—possibly in urging men to get serious about the life of the home. "Her's her's it," means one guy I know, a recent father still surprised to find himself more intrigued by his kids than by his PR business.

These wasn't always a lot of honesty in that old man-to-man, elbow-to-elbow stuff, either. Too many guys used the humor and the cynicism as an avoidance mechanism.

Those of us trying more honest male expression must be wary of the charge that we propose nothing new and a return to some theoretical

media norm: the world as an eternal ladder, never, never, stepping in a philosophy of life. The truth is, most guys have always been more decent and thoughtful than that, just as today, even as we belatedly come to grips with how much of ourselves we've actually imprisoned over the past couple of decades, we'll readily acknowledge the ways the new emotional climate has it all over the old.

In brief, we're being encouraged to reveal ourselves as the contradictory creatures we are. At once sensitive and capable of terrific insensitivity. Thoughtful and crude. Sensitive and self-absorbed. And, in almost every circumstance, this somewhere to think hard about one thing at once. Like, say, do I have any brothers and sisters under the right, perhaps business end of the woman delirious? What we're at last willing to say aloud is, Sorry this is the way it is, it can't be softened away. No wonder we were it at.

Not finally, do these women—and their number, too, is rapidly increasing—who are looking to move past self-righteousness toward genuine understanding between the sexes.

Not long ago, as it happens, I found myself asked, beside that same female editor at a dinner party—the first time I'd seen her in all these years—through-two-ourses we kept the conversation somewhat, usually on our kids, the now has two boys, aged six and four, but our daughter, the married had to me, saying, "By the way, there's something I haven't told you. They look love working with clay." She laughed. "Thank I should be worried?"

**"My ideal guy's Tarzan,"
a woman I know says.
"He doesn't complain
at all about his feelings."**



Is his figure less than Greek? Is his mouth a little weak? Sure, but Julia Roberts married him, so stop smirking and start reading.

Gotta Lovett

By E. Jean Carroll

"Have you started smacking Julia around yet?"

Lyle smiles. "No!"

"The marriage isn't breaking up?" I ask.

Lyle laughs. "No!"

"But they're saying it's splitsville . . . tonight on *Hard Copy*."

He's startled. "On what?"

"They're saying *Julia Roberts and Lyle Lovett—are they too busy for each other? Tune in tonight for A Life Apart*."

"Oh!" Lyle is petrified with delight.

"Wait. Don't tell me you're actually in love with your wife?"

"I am."

His hair is hanging off his head like a big veal chop. Freud asked, "What do women want?" This is what women want. Yes, Lyle Lovett is what women want. He knows how to be a man.

"A man can't be in love with his own wife!" I screech. "Why, you don't even live together!"

"I live in Houston," says Lyle.

"Right."

"Julia has a place in New York."

"Right."

Roll over, Gary Grant, and call Chuck Gable the name: Lyle Lovett is contemporary male perfection on the hoof.

"What's the matter?" I say, alarmed. Lyle asks, not smiling, "Why did you address her as Miss Roberts? She uses *my* name in real life."

"And she's worried almost every day since we got married. We're just so happy to be together when we can be." His complexion—what a shade! Like a peeled cucumber.

"And the longer you stay apart, the happier you're gonna be," I say.

"No."
His hair flies up merrily.

"You're not planning on living in the same house, are you?"

"Well, I think it would be great," says Lyle. "But it doesn't look like an immediate possibility."

He is a skinny man, in the height of fashion, with a low, soft, trvoxy voice, very deadpan. ("I don't come alive. I never come alive. I stay just like this.") Blue eyes, nose like a mulberry, cheeks like cheese boards, and he's wearing a beautiful Armani jacket, tight black trousers, and black lace-up shoes.

"It looks as if you've found the secret to happiness."

I say:

"I don't know," says Lyle, shaking his head.

"Are you happy with Julia?"

"I am."

"And are you living together?"

"Not in the traditional sense."

"I rest my case."

HE WAS BORN AND RAISED in a little town just north of Houston called Klein, a town founded by his mother's family, brought up by hardworking, hard-working Exxon executives, an only child, the darling of his mother-in-law's uncle, Calvin Klein. He is a journalist graduate from *Newsweek*, the *Saturday Review* of country music ("I need to impress her because I'd like to address her"), winner of the 1993 Grammy for best male vocalist, movie actor (in Robert Altman's *The Player*, Short Cat, and soon *Pit & Pen*), and now husband of Miss Julia Roberts. Lyle inclines his head across his plate, clears his throat, and says, in a low voice, "There are universal truths about women."

"Oh! Let me hear one," I say, coaxed.

Long pause.

"Women like to eat outside," says Lyle.

"TELL ME ANOTHER UNIVERSAL TRUTH about women," I say. He's having a bottle of water, the grilled chicken salad, and the Louisiana black-peppered shrimp, inside, at the Ivy in Los Angeles.

"Well," he tries.

Oh, not your brutal, stobbering, cavernous cry-on, Lyle is elegant. Lyle never raises his voice above the noise of a coyote.

"It's not like a lot I keep coming?" He flexes a shoulder blade in comic indignation. He is the perfect man. No golf, no tennis, drives an '84 Ford pickup, doesn't hunt, doesn't fish (but doesn't have anything against them), wears well, speaks well, doesn't yell, doesn't lie. He's witty, he's rich, he's famous, he doesn't bother his wife, and his manner in doing all this is... nondescript. That's the key.

He is a Complete Handbook for Gentlemen.

He will not come before a female. We're flashing around town in his strait black Mercedes, heading toward the Troubadour, where he has to do a sound check for tonight's performance with Rickie Lee Jones, and he's arguing about Thomas Mann, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Immanuel Kant (which Lyle, who speaks fluent German, shyness inwardly with Jeez), when he says: "Somebody called me that once onstage."

I'm amazed.

"Somebody once called you Immanuel Kant?"

I say:

"No," says Lyle.

"What'd they call you, then?"

"What'd you just say?" says Lyle.

"Immanuel Kant."

"No."

I ask my boss.

"Friedrich Nietzsche?"

"No! The one you just said."

I stare at him. His hair is standing on his head like a bunch of frozen gushers.

"You're so close," says Lyle.

"Thomas Mann?" I say.

He rolls his eyes.

"Immanuel," he says.

"Immanuel." I repeat.

I wonder if falling to my knees on the Mercedes floor will drag it out of him.

"What's his last name?" says Lyle.

"Kant."

"See," says Lyle. He almost swears. "Somebody called me that once onstage in London."

"Well, it makes sense," I say. "Kant's philosophy—"

"Not that," yelps Lyle, giving the steering wheel a bang. "Not a word."

I glance at him.

"Oh? I think 'Kant'."

He nearly merges into the incoming traffic.

"See," says Lyle.



Is the Lovett to death? The celluloid screen that the marriage is a game. Lyle and Julia insist it's weird but working.

He wags his high forehead.

"What'd you say to the guy from the stage?" I ask.

Pause.

"I said, 'Yes, I can.'"

NOW, THAT IS HOW A MAN should be. Not a brat. Not a wimp. Somebody who can wince. The babies make me sick! The babies make me afraid that fat baby snarl! and still want to father children upon his wife. Lyle Lovett has the right look, the right job, and the

right line—a massively exaggerated humility. The fact that he actually is humble doesn't help.

"What if I drop you as a symbol of what a man should be in 1994?" I ask.

"I think that would be really funny," says Lyle, but he is looking at me like a young seal just before a gun chubbed on the head.

I've already mentioned that he has the right spouse.

Three years ago Miss Julia Roberts was asked on TV who her favorite country singer was, and she shouted out, "Lyle Lovett!" Then, two years ago, Susan Sarandon's brother was interviewing Lyle for the *St. Pauling* Times and mentioned that he just got back from a vacation in Costa Rica with his sister and Miss Roberts, "and he told me that Julia was listening to my... oh, you know, tapes," says Lyle, shyly.

"Did you picture her in a sexy-cloth robe listening to them?" I say.

Pause.

We've left the Troubadour and have been doing some errands, and now we're driving down Sunset. Lyle rubs his nose for a moment and then shoots a look at me with his right eyebrow dropped halfway down his face. The thought suddenly crosses my mind, *Is he the poor bastard who found Arnold?*

"So it's not going to use what just happened with Oliver Stone, are you?" he says.

Aloud. A snide.

"No," I say.

He is surprised.

"Thank you," he says. "I'm not used to being treated this way."

"Clory! So! You pictured her naked?"

"Well—what Susan Sarandon's brother said was... " He takes in a breath to fix up his amplifiers. He is so long-headed and short-tempered, he can hardly bring himself to say the words. "The wouldn't get in the car without one of my tapes."

"Yes."

"So I pictured her... in a car," says Lyle.

His face is the color of a carbide.

"In a car?"

"Well, in a... Jeep," he says, modestly.

"In short shorts?"

"I don't know if it was a Jeep, but I pictured her in a Jeep," he says.

There's a lot of boy in Lyle.

"With her hair flying?" I say.

"No. It was still," says Lyle.

"Her hair was just hanging there?"

"It was perfect," says Lyle. "A perfect Jeep."

"And you pictured her wearing pants and a bikini?" I'm afraid that if I suggest anything less than total coverage, he'll slip me with a glove and challenge me to a duel.

"Caucus and flip-flops," says Lyle.

"And And—a bikini? T-shirt?"

"No! Now—because I didn't get above the waist!"

"You did?"

"No!"

"You pictured her hair."

The Richness of Red. Magnified.

His caught. His right ear jumps forward.
"I saw her from the back," he says. "I saw her arm sort of—the side of her arm."

"What?" I say. "The face of John Roberts is too much for a man to dream about?"

"That's right," says Lyle.

It must have been the shock of his life when he saw her in the flesh. His hair was probably in such a fix it couldn't contain itself.

"I understand that," I say.

"Thank you," says Lyle.

THE CROWD REELTS INTO A TWO-MINUTE SILENT evasion when Rickie Lee Jones introduces her surprise guest, Lyle Lovett. He is no dreamer, so silent, so stirring in black Converse dress Gargans, he gets four or five big laughs just by gazing—a dazzling expression that has the additional appeal of occurring only on the left side of his face. Rickie Lee, in a flimsy and leeching carmine-colored sundress, shielding her eyes with her hand, shrugs up to the lighting technicians. "Could you do a mood thing?"

A blast of silicon links down on the stage.

Rickie Lee turns the color of cold hamburger. So Lyle, who can out-sing Harold Faltermeyer, looks at Rickie Lee for a moment, then looks down at his black leather shoes, then looks up at the technicians, shrugs one should die, and says:

"A good mood thing?"

As for his so-called country songs, Lyle is so far out on the edge there is not only nobody equal to him, there is nobody second to him. He hasn't written much lately, though.

"Nobody wants to hear how happy I am," he says, sadly.

I TEAR A PAGE OUT OF MY NOTEBOOK and hand it to Lyle.

"This is for Miss Judy," I say.

"Oh," says Lyle, happily. "Thanks you."

He takes it out of my hand and glances at the writing. All of a sudden his face falls.

"What's the matter?" I say, alarmed.

"Why did you address her as Miss Roberts?" he says. He is not smiling.

"Because I've never met her," I say. "I called you Mr. Lovett before you asked me to call you Lyle."

"She uses my name in real life," says Lyle.

"Oh?"

Her beauty always frightens me. They're not normal. I snatch the note out of his hand and cross out the "Dear Miss Roberts" and write "Dear Mr. Lovett."

"Hi, MISS CARROLL, this is John Lovett calling you. I got your note today with the questions for me, and if your phone machine gives me, this is a way to [say hi to you], but it's because I'm shooting right, so I thought I'd seize this opportunity."

"Okay. Question number one: 'What characteristics of Lyle's would you like to see in your unborn child?' Ahh, I can't think of one. I wouldn't want The whole ball of wax would be fine with me! His kindness, I think, is funnier to my mind. His taste. His sort of strange slant on the world

at large. His earnestness. I could go on and on but that would be a whole interview in itself."

"Number two: 'Who is more beautiful, you or Lyle?' That's tricky. It all depends on definitions of beauty. People's interpretations of beauty. . . . I don't necessarily interpret myself as beautiful. I think Lyle is, though. I don't know if that answers your question. But that's a hard one."

"Three: 'Where do your dreams meet?' Somewhere about five miles off of Venus."

"Four: 'Will Lyle hand you this note?' He actually gave it to my girlfriend Suzanne, who did his makeup today at the photo shoot, because she was going to see me before him, and he came walking in the door ten minutes after her—so he didn't hand it to me, but he was there."

"Okay? Well, I'm glad that you enjoyed spending time with Lyle. I know that I do, too! So I'm sure you had a really good time. I hope I've answered these questions well enough for you, and take care. All right. Bye-bye."

LELE HIMSELF SWEARS THAT the only person who can show anyone how to be a man today is David Letterman. "He's the most widely imitated person in our culture," says Lyle.

But I know better. I have kinked into things, done my research, and now have one final, decisive master on the subject of manhood to bring up. The only difficulty remaining is how to spring it on Lyle.

Time is running out. The suave vice-president of public relations at MCA Records, a highly attractive and efficient woman named Paula Patton, is leaving for the airport. I am catching a ride with her. We are late. Everyone is rushing, bolting out the doors, people are bringing our suitcases, Lyle and Paula are having a quiet last word. It's now or never.

"Oh, Lyle!" I say, raising my voice as the limousine driver hops out and comes forward as to help with the luggage. Lyle doesn't hear.

"Oh, Lyle," I say again. "I've heard on the girl vine that you're one of the most well-endowed fellows in show business."

Suitcases drop to the pavement like rattling plums.

Paula:

"What?" says Lyle.

It is a highly embarrassing situation.

Paula Patton, for instance, is in charge of Lyle Lovett's publicity. What should she do? Come to her client's assistance and deny it? Blunder me with accusations? Or confirm the rumor?

She handles it like Ted Koppel.

"I've never heard that," she says. Smart move. Lyle's face, meanwhile, looks like a gas explosion.

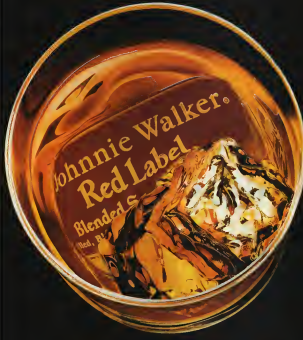
"Oh, yes?" I say. "Everybody knows it."

Indeed, it is a much-talked-about fact among studio females—Lyle's right up there with Milla Faria and David Cassidy.

"Most well-endowed," I say.

Lyle's hair springs off his head like a Venus's flytrap.

"Well," says Lyle, with a merry laugh, reaching over to open my door. "That just goes to show you. Imagination is always more colorful than the real thing." ■



The real casualties of Desert Storm may have been the soldiers who came back alive. A haunting account of a mysterious malady: Gulf War Syndrome. BY GREGORY JAYNES

WALKING WOUNDED

I WAS IN BIRMINGHAM one night so told the bars in your necktie turned to agitates, and I called Willie Hicks to ask directions to his house. Hicks had recently testified before a Senate subcommittee, saying he ran into something during Desert Storm, some chemical, some gas, something that had shot his life in hell. He and a few thousand American veterans, a number growing by the day, were seeking compensation for and an explanation of the mysterious ailments that have bedeviled them since their service in the Persian Gulf. The thing was getting to be known as Gulf War Syndrome. "Since you don't know where you is, I'll come get you," Hicks said on the phone and in a little while rolled up in a rusted-out Datsun with no heater. He killed the engine and had to get out and start it under the hood with a pair of pliers. "Can't afford no fifty-dollar ignition," he said.

The car coughed into heavy traffic before Hicks said, "This is some shit we got. Whatever it is I ain't supposed to be driving. I pass out a lot. Last time I drove I was on my way to work and I wound up in Tuscaloosa. Didn't know why." I volunteered to drive, with alacrity, but Hicks said he thought he could make it all right this time.

"I taught special oil and I worked at Auto Zone till I passed out and fell off a thirty-foot ladder," he continued.

After Stirling Sins told a Senate subcommittee about his theories, he paid his own way home to Alabama. "But maybe not," he comforted himself, "the shit will hit the fan."

"I was making \$2,500 a month. You telling me I can quit \$2,500 a month just to get some pussy damn disability? Shit! The problem is the government don't want to admit we got pissed. All of us got the same syndrome. Memory loss. Can't sleep. Shit, I don't sleep more than two, three hours a day. Anxiety. I weighed 205 pounds about three months ago. I was gone! away, gone! away! They put me on medication. I'm taking thirty-one different damn pills. I started getting sick about a month after I got back. Couldn't get along with nobody. They said it was post-traumatic stress. Shit, I ain't got no PTSD. You get an sick-week I couldn't even get out the house. This week okay but the nightmares."

"I don't even sleep with my wife no more. Too damn dangerous. Post-traumatic stress, my black ass. Some of us bleed from the penis. Bleed all over the sheets. Government won't even pay us for the sheets. If I've got PTSD, how come I can't remember where I am half the time? We got a guy thirty-six years old, all his damn teeth damn fall out. Bobby Bell dropped dead when he come back. He was still young."

"Can't none of us hold a job. We all living a nightmare, man. I've had a headache for two damn years. We all got skin sores all over the place. Lookin' here." He drew up his shirt. His thorax was so pocked it looked as if he

Willie Hicks's National Guard unit was issuing a notification when it was told to prepare for chemical attack. "My face was burning," Hicks says. "We were burning."

"IT'S CHEAPER THEY BURY US—THEY SURE AIN'T GONNA PAY US."

Since Operation Desert Storm, more than sixteen thousand veterans—all ranks, ages, races—have been stricken by symptoms that have collectively become known as Gulf War Syndrome: joint pain, rashes, headaches, vision loss, even cancer. The Pentagon initially denied the existence of any such illnesses; one government doctor spoke instead of "mass hallucinations." Here, portraits from the home front.



Ken Martin, twenty-four, Fort Benning, Georgia. Evacuated from Iraq before the end of the war because of symptoms. Discharged.

had lost an eye-patch fight. "It's cheaper they bury us, the way I see it, 'cause they damn sure ain't gonna pay us." We pulled up at a tidy bungalow Hicks said, "Come on in the go' home."

ON THE FIRST DAY of the war, JANUARY 17, 1991, Willie Hicks and his Alabama National Guard unit, the 644th Ordnance Company, were making ammunition near the Kuwait border when alarms began to sound and the order came down to suit up in full chemical-battle gear. "As we were running to the bunker, we were burning," Hicks said. "My face was burning." He said they stayed in their masks and protective gear for twenty-four hours. When the incident was over, the unit was ordered not to discuss it.

A fellow Alabamian, Sterling Sims, tells a similar story. On January 19, alarms sounded in his camp in Al Jubail, 390 miles southwest of the Kuwait border. As Sims's battalion unit prepared for chemical or biological attack, there was an explosion and a fireball, and an unbearable odor caused soldiers' eyes to smart.

Hicks and Sims both settled last June before Alabama's Senate Richard Shelby's Armed Services subcommittee on military health care. Shelby had a special interest



Rose Grizzetti, thirty-three, 400th Chemical Battalion, Alabama. Chronic arthritis pain.

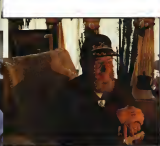
Alabama sent more guardsmen and reservists to the war than any other state. Sims told the committee that his most demonstrable plague since Desert Storm was a case of skin sores that would not be deflated. "Would you like to see these?" he asked the senators.

"Sure," said Shelby. An assistant secretary of defense and the surgeon general of the Army, Navy, and Air Force sat by. Sims removed his pants, raised his sleeves, and showed the committee the same sort of red welts I would later see on Hicks. "There's nothing that does anything for it," Sims said.

Shelby asked, "Is that all over your body?"

"Yes," Sims said, beginning to shed his shirt but then thinking better of it. He said doctors at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Birmingham had diagnosed "itchy skin." The VA suggested a psychiatrist might be of help. But psychiatry wasn't curing Sims's sores, his fatigue, the pain in his joints, his sinus problems, or his memory loss. Acting Rear Admiral Edward Morris, the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, told the senators that symptoms were appearing among active-duty personnel. "Something did happen," he said. "The nature of it is difficult to estimate."

Hicks and Sims went home, on their own nickel, to their own messes. Hicks was so worried from the congressional show that he watched like a cartoon car with a paw caught in a wall socket. Sims brooded, not sure whether the issue in Washington had belated him. "But maybe now" he consoled himself, "the shit will be the fix."



Phila Webster, sixty-one, 644th Ordnance Company, Korea veteran. Diagnosed with chemical exposure.



Nick Roberts, thirty-nine, 24th Sustainment, Longhorn.

the American Legion hall in Birmingham. One, John Goss, said, had suffered a heart attack the night of the January 20 incident. The other, Gene Trucks, started falling down in South Arabia and now can't stop.

The meeting affected Parks profoundly. "We met in a back room and Sterling told his story and I thought, 'Well, okay people get information there,'" Parks says. "Then it came to John, and I thought, 'Well, people get heart problems, but Gene had that glazed look in his eyes. He could barely talk. He finally looked at me and said, 'Will it's got so bad I've got' have to decline membership.' And he starts to cry. And I thought right then the least I can do is—well, these guys deserved some answers."

Parks found that army-serve members of the same Alabama Scabos unit had been stricken. And many more were vocalizing their problems for fear they would lose their pensions, as Gene Trucks did. He was discharged nine months shy of twenty years' service, which would have qualified him for a pension at sixty. Trucks is fifty-five. This case is under review.

Parks decided to find the official story. He first paid a visit to the Department of Veterans Affairs.



Todd Workman, twenty-nine, receiving "Gulf war protocol exam." Vision loss, headaches, joint pain.

THEY'RE BEEN MAKING hallucinations. There's been mass post-traumatic stress disorder. And there are also some people who'd like to have compensation." Edward Young is chief of staff at the Houston VA Medical Center and for a time last year headed one of three special referral centers the government had set up for Gulf vets with health problems. "I think we're the only country in the world that's gone out and said to former military personnel, 'You know, we may have hurt you while you were on active duty.'" Young said. "If that isn't one way to cause a disease, I don't know what is."

Seeing no legitimate medical basis for these complaints, Young made no attempt at military in dealing his theory for Drew Parks. "It's very interesting that a large group of people come out of the reserves or National Guard. We have people who signed up because they were glad to take a paycheck for showing up to boot camp every week or once a year, but when they actually had to be sent over there and subjected to all this stuff—you think they're not angry? I think these guys may have a big role in this, as some veterans."

Word of Dr. Young's remarks made it to Jesse Brown, secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. After a brief suspension, Young was relieved of any responsibility for Gulf-war problems.

Then last July the Czech Republic released a report indicating that its troops had put up low levels of chemical contamination during the war. The Pentagon, the report said, had been informed. The Defense Department, though, continued throughout the summer to maintain that there simply had been no such exposure. By Labor Day, the Department of Veterans Affairs, which had set up a Persian Gulf war registry for veterans who wished to be examined, reported that 1,500 had responded, and more were signing up.

Mean while months of illnesses began to come out of the woods of Georgia, North Carolina, Mississippi (where, of course, there was no war), and the state of New York, where additional significant health problems? Still, the numbers were seen as meagre when compared with the massive figure of 150,000 troops, from both sides, who were somebody's people in a war. The first numbers of any consequence came from the VA on September 11 of 1990: 200 veterans surveyed, 74 percent reported some physical problem, and 10 percent reported mental or social-adjustment problems, 42 percent were angry, 35 percent had painful back, necks, shoulders, 35 percent had headaches, 19 percent had skin rashes. The phrase "Gulf War Syndrome"—no diagnosis, no treatment—was running through the ranks.

ON OCTOBER 18, 1995, in a classified briefing, the Defense Department acknowledged it had received the Czech report. The Department of Veterans Affairs immediately set up a pilot program in Birmingham for testing the vets. Secretary Jesse Brown said in announcing the program that his agency had "never ruled out the possibility of exposure to chemical agents, despite the fact that, until recently, the Defense Department had assured us there was no evidence that chemical agents had been detected." The Pentagon remained mute for a couple of weeks, until Les Aspin, then secretary of defense, held a briefing to say the department considered the Czech reports of low levels of mustard gas and nerve agents called arms to be valid, though they could not be verified independently. "That was our one report, and, besides, the Czechs didn't pick up enough of the stuff to cause harm, Aspin said. "A connection to the apparent health problems that have bothered some of our veterans," he said, "continues to prove elusive."

One week later a meeting convened before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee that the unit had mailed a blistering angry review in Rome on the day the ground war started. They were using a German-made Fox chemical-detection vehicle, said Chief Weapons Officer Joseph P. Cottrell, "the only reliable and accurate detection system employed." Wright responded the DGO—that was oil cooler. Then came an Alabama doctor, Charles Jackson, from the Tuskegee VA Center, who told a House subcommittee that about a quarter of the veterans he had interviewed had "idiopathic" symptoms. "The problems these individuals are having," said Jackson, "are absolutely consistent with biological agents." The doctor had advanced some rational anatomy a month before for the first official American diagnosis of injury resulting from chemical or biological agents used during Desert Storm.

Depending on whom you listened to, the cause was chemical, toxic, a fungus in the sand. In New Orleans, a geriatric physician named Edward Hyman, who had had

some success treating various vet ailments (Sterling Sosa wrote by Hyman), said, "They came across a bad germ that spread all over the place. Whether it's a natural organism or whether the madman of Baghdad created it, I do not know."

At the end of the year approached, the theory of "toxic-chemical sensitivity" was gaining currency among scientists. This view holds that once the body is overloaded with toxic agents it reacts allergically to the most common things, an irritating perfume can bring you down. The theory's proponents, so-called environmental physicians, are vastly outnumbered by the other side, which holds that chemical sensitivity does not, for one, strike the immune system, therefore making you prey, AIDS-like, to white poxes of diseases riding down the pipe. As for the rice-frog, confusion, or oil—well, in the case of wet veterans, they used to call it shell shock. For patients complaining of multiple chemical sensitivity, an editorial in the *Journal of Internal Medicine*, leaving to the orthodoxy suggested "antidotes: desensitization and psychotherapy are rational approaches."

In Birmingham, Don Patis confirmed that orthodoxy writing more stories. A vet from Gadsden who was working as a police officer had seen a VA psychiatrist and been told that he just needed to stop thinking about the war and find a new line of work because he didn't have the nerve to be a soldier or a cop. Next, Patis turned up a thirty-year-old gardener from Lincoln, a youth assistant at the local Baptist church, who said he got positive readings for nerve gas on the night of January 12. "We have a confirmed gas attack," his husband's nonsensical official in charge announced as the alarm sounded. "This is not a drill."

Chief Warner Officer Joseph Cottrell again appeared before a congressional committee. Regardless of what the Pentagon said, he explained, his equipment didn't lie. This was a Fox, one of the state-of-the-art contamination sensors that the Germans had put in the war. It was the best we had, Cottrell said. Congressman Joe Kennedy had a dog in this fight. The MMR was spectrometer used on the Fox is manufactured by Bruker Instruments of Massachusetts. Kennedy had called Bruker to confirm that oil smoke couldn't destroy an baby-Glen Brewer of Alabama was asked why the Pentagon still had it back up. He responded with clarity and candor in a congressional. "To acknowledge those sensory casualties may blow out our Persian Gulf victory," he said. "But I personally suspect that dealing openly and fairly with these mystery ailments will require the Pentagon to make budgetary and programmatic adjustments that it does not want to make."

There it was. You say there was exposure and you open yourself to tens of thousands of claims and billions of dol-

"Living a nightmare": Sims had scores that would not be defeated. The VA suggested a psychiatrist might help.



lars in damages. The figures had all been so notoriously low: 650,000 troops deployed, 445 Americans killed in action, 21 dead outside combat, eight wounded in combat. George Bush, the hero of his *Resting Hero* And now this?

In late November, Congress passed a bill that recognized Gulf War Syndrome and authorized examinations of affected servicemen and servicewomen. The Veterans Administration now reports that more than sixteen thousand veterans have enrolled in its Persian Gulf Registry.

I ABOUT THE WINTER driving around from one cluster of sick veterans to another, listening. When they found out I had been in Saudi Arabia as a journalist during the war, they all seemed to know about my health, which is pretty good. I guess, although I haven't looked under the hood lately. The paradox here is that the government we always have prosecuted here: Their January 1990 war defense from Iraq. In my case, you could stand on a berm east of the Saudi town of Hufuf al Bahr, near the Kuwait border, and watch the oil fires and the black smoke rise so much higher than my skyscraper, and when the bombers crossed over your shoulder from behind, if you continued standing there for a few moments, the hot, smoky fumes of their pyrotechns would come back to your nose and later that night you could smell it in your beard. In a while, though, if you lay down long enough, some one-scented, Harvared American jerks would come along, spit you as a brigand, and remove you under threat of arrest and deportation, so rightly did America hold the risk. For all I know, such poisoning, so repellent at the time, saved my life. "Men," one soldier vet said to me, "I wish they'd treated me like they treated you."

In January, I spent one bright, clear day in a crater in Rhineland, with Nick Roberts, a thirty-year-old doctor for soldiers who has worked the lymph nodes. Roberts had a vinyl-siding business before the war, and in Saudi Arabia he had been building concrete bunkers. "I was sick before I ever left from over powder to these boys," he told me. "I went to the Navy's VA—everything that we had to do we did. I landed in September '91, with the VA in Tanglelog. I had to work myself up to see the surgeon to get a biopsy of my lymph glands, in my groin, in my neck. This was in November '91. He said, 'You're fine. I don't know why they even worried their oil and you up here to see me.' That's when I told myself, 'You better get yourself a real doctor.'"

"I had to get pay for a CAT scan. I had to find my own oxygen. There was a rumor in my stomach. The doctor said, 'Your livers would have gone down so to eight weeks from now. You would have gone into a coma and died.' I went straight into chemotherapy. The Navy sent me down here and I was experiencing post-traumatic stress. Now I get a five- to seven-year prognosis."

Later in the afternoon we were joined in the trailer by some of Roberts's war buddies, Larry Ray and Ray Morrow and Bob Wagers. All it seemed, were being methodically destroyed. Listening to the newest generation of old soldiers, well, it's like reading *Burned Bodies*.

"You talking about my headaches now? There should be an inventory list of ailments a piece."

"Do you work?"

"Oh, by the time I get on back to the house it kills me, so I have to either get it bed or on the couch."

"You can't work even with the shots—that's no good!" "Yuh, it just makes you sick all over again."

"Last night was a bad night for me. I couldn't get to bed before 6:00 on that morning because of the headaches. Must have gone to the bathroom twenty times."

"You've so gone out you'd think you'd drop but you don't."

"You notice your sweat smells worse than it used to?" "Boy here smells."

"You take your shirt off and it's awful."

"You in luck and a hell of a lot better."

"It's happening to Ray Butler. He's shorter. I'm losing my hair."

"My weight has fluctuated fifty pounds this winter."

"I can't get back one ton muscle from the VA. If I was signed into authorities, I've signed a hundred."

And so on.

From Phenix City I drove to Meridian, Mississippi, for a congressional hearing in a federal courtroom where the post office just that morning, in Washington, an announcement was being made that the departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services were joining forces to study these illnesses. Then the words of a grandson came forward. "My husband never saw any combat," said Andrew West, "but there was another enemy that infiltrated his unit. They didn't come home alone." Mrs. West's husband, Dennis, set behind her. He had been with the Sixth Quartermaster Company, which had distributed fuel to ground forces. The couple had a daughter in February 1991, born with underdeveloped lungs. As they coped with the infant's respiratory problems, going back and forth to the hospital, Mrs. West discovered that other new mothers from the unit had babies with illnesses similar to her daughter's.

"This is not healthy," she said. "These are not made-up stories. This thing is going on in Mississippi. This thing, nationwide. Desert Storm is alive and well in our homes." Further testimony revealed that of fifty-five children born to four Guard units in Mississippi, thirty-seven were not normal for one reason or another—an enlarged liver, a third breast.

The hearing on itself has afternoon. Government as therapists testified they were working on it, they were working on it. At adjournment, Congressman Browder, seaguard, seemed to sit the air. "Are we going to get to a place where we can help these people before they die?"

IN BIRMINGHAM, at Willie Hulse's house, Willie had disappeared, leaving me sitting in his den. Daffy Daffy asking me on a blaring TV. I looked around the house and found Willie's wife, Gloria, in the kitchen. "You've got to stop here," she said, saying she didn't know where he'd gone. "He don't know what he's doing. He don't know where he's going." Directly, Willie Hulse stroked back in with another vet, Walter Davis, on his arm. Walter had a tale of psychosis. One day he was fine, the next, hell of him could not move. Don Patis had warned that the evidence would begin to show us. As usual, Patis was on the money. Time to go. "I don't expect to be alive next Christmas," Willie said, his hand in mine. "That's why I keep a careful life about." He passed it. "When the government gets around to admitting it was wrong, in about twenty years, I sell my wife, watch in here and get yo' money." ■



The New Phone Sex

In the hyperaddictive, supercheery Shangri-la known as QVC, the perfect you is simply a dial tone away. But will you still respect yourself in the morning?

By Elizabeth Kaye

WHILE NIELSEN, Amazon.com, is doing those auctions on the home-shopping channel known as QVC. He is hosting Willie Nelson. The Close Unleashed Collection is recording of forty-one songs that includes potential dance hits "Why Are You Faking on Me?" and "You might ask why Willie would turn to home

shopping," a QVC public relations woman suggests. "What his thoughts and his feelings were."

But then, it is not difficult to imagine at least a few thoughts and feelings that might occur to a man who was recently dubbed by the IRS for tax evasion and has, in any case, a history of embarking on occasionally doomed business ventures at the behest of friends; in this instance, one Allen Stahl, self-described veteran of "twenty-plus years in the music business on the business side" and president of the eighteen-month-old Willie Nelson Collectibles.

It was Allen Stahl who opened Willie of QVC's base audience—more than four million viewers at any given time. "I told him the audience we could hit,"

Allen Stahl recalls. "Forty-plus."

Of course, Willie already had a wildly enthusiastic forty-plus audience. "But you have to make it easier," Allen Stahl told him, "for them to get fresh, new product. We want to be the first people to achieve a gold record on cable."

"Great," said Willie. "Let's do it."

And so, on a February night, the Richmond, Virginia, hip head grew grey, slighted from his seat and played his Tiny Lottas boots on the terrace-floor of QVC's lobby. Half an hour later, he is in a sound check, plucking his trapeze guitar while sitting on the very same couch where John Tash of Entertainment Weekly pitched his *Somewhere* album.

"Voluntarism, be my volunteer..." sings Willie. Then he stops. "That woman's still a little loud," he says.

Forty-nine minutes after airtime, QVC's phones are ringing and operators are taking orders for the Willie CDs and Willie cassette boxed set, not to mention the Willie vest, Willie western shirt, Willie plaque embossed with a photograph of Willie at his induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame, and the Willie biographical video, all fifteen hundred copies of which have sold out.

And then there is Willie himself, according to QVC's audience, "I really look at myself as a salesman of music," and demonstrating his mastery of American small-townness, whereas the audience of profit is achieved for higher motives.

"I really wanted this [record collection] out," he says. "Not from a monetary standpoint, but because the music should be out."

Bob Bowersox, QVC's resident chef and host of the Willie Nelson Hour, wonders whether Willie wouldn't sing another song.

"Well, there's a song called 'Volunteer,'"

GEORGE LANGR

While the exclusive, in its instance had just dawned on him. But in the gymnasium, Allen Strahl favors. He thinks While he is being asked to sing too much. Then somebody tells him that QVC's phones ring more when Willie sings.

QVC—letters that stand proudly for the great American virtues of quality, value, convenience—the mythic better mousetrap, that chemical idea whose time has come, a juggernaut whose audience is divided only by the first days of the Gulf war, the Los Angeles and San Francisco earthquakes, and figurative segments of the Olympics.

As a twenty-four-hour shopping service, shown on 4,400 cable systems, QVC employs 4,500 people, including 30 hosts who offer an average of 200 items a day in prices ranging from \$5 to \$1,500. In its peak selling day, January 14, 1995, QVC took in \$95 million. That was the 14th anniversary of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, California, an event QVC commemorates annually with an all-gold jewelry day that features 14,000 pieces for an average price of \$95 per unit. With a database that can identify the QVC customers on any given block in any given American city, that is a business version that might have been dreamed up by training Jackie Collins with Ray Bradbury.

As its business is quick to point out, QVC required a secret sale year—1986 to 1992—to go from start-up to annual gross sales of a billion dollars. That gross, in 1995, was \$1.2 billion, accounting for a merchandise return rate that QVC delicately puts at "around 10 percent," and somewhat higher for dishes.

Still, consider the 550,000 and 600,000 units sold, respectively of the Amstar Instant Air Cleaner and the Blackstone Infused Pan Set, QVC items V3030 and V3030. And the more than 100 million generated by the Joan Rivers Classic Collection, a 1994 line purchased from a designer, as a QVC official explains, "to look like a New York penthouse." On a high day, Rivers sells one thousand bracelets. "On a low day we sell fifteen hundred in seven minutes," she says. "That's not huge."

Of course, nothing is tragic at QVC, which is a mix of seamless collections and no-longer-fake sales, where a solution exists for every problem, and ingrown hairs and painful aching are remedied by After Shave Comfort Lotion followed by Time Release Moisturizer. This is a magical, redemptive place, where "if you make your jewelry as important as your wardrobe, you'll never want for any look."

Seventy percent of QVC's viewers are women, as are retail customers nationwide. QVC releases no data about the social class of these shoppers. "Our audience," declares a spokeswoman, "is anybody who has a television set."

Still, on a clear day you can see the demographics. Clothes have classic waistbands. The women's sizes most in demand are Large and XL, the equivalent of ladies' sizes 12 to 20. Toys are promoted to sell "through au-

gent different children," bicycles are useful so that "kids can go up and down the cul-de-sac." A man's romantic ring might be "the ring he'll wear to your forty-fifth anniversary celebration." Phones ring off the hook when the special value, presented nightly at midnight, was an Archer Hooding twenty-two piece microwaveable storage set priced at \$80.40. When you place your order, operators ask, "Is there an apartment or a lot number?"

And in a nation where no one can stand anybody anymore, QVC is an electronic oasis, a shopping experience with fervent participants of love between buyers and sellers. "I just love you," says Phyllis Rogers, the host of *Living It Up*, as she sells her ruffled fabric, accented hair comb.

"I just love the product," a woman who has bought the Complete Hair System tells Victoria Principal.

"I just love you for smiling," Principal responds. "And tell all my friends about it."

"God bless you, Victoria," the caller replies.

But the particular genius of QVC is its ability to arrange on the American psychic precisely where its donors want: romance, civilization and heterosex, interest. "You work hard. Why not treat yourself to the real thing? Gold," reads a promo in the QVC program guide for the Gold Hour. "Go ahead. Buy now."

How can this be done so easily? the QVC shoppers wonder. And soon QVC's offers will be filtered by another purchase informed by the distinctly American stratified mix of envy, eye care and fear of the future.

WHEN QVC BEGAN broadcasting in 1986, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was soaring and the boom mentality was up-bell with itself religious fervor. But then came Black Monday, in October 1987, and after that, a belief that buying and selling would proceed as national pastimes required the kind of faith widely thought to have given rise to the American century.

At QVC, that faith never faltered. Somewhere, its founders either recognized or sensed what other social observers missed when declaring that the Nineties would be the making-back decade, in which the nation would atone for excesses of the Eighties by a style both simpler and smaller. What these observers failed to see did not become clear until spring of 1990 at the Academy Awards. There, American evening gowns and tuxedos were augmented by the little red ribbon—now composed of tiny rubies—that signifies solidarity with people with AIDS, a sign that the Nineties would be less about sympathy than about meaningful life. In other words, it would remain the sort of society it had always been, a society Edith Wharton described as one in which "consciousness passes for distinction." Naturally, that is the world to which QVC shoppers aspire.

"If you entered the world of fine gemstones, if you walked onto Madison Avenue or Worth Avenue or Rodeo Drive," a QVC host points one afternoon, "chances are you'd say, 'What do you have in up there?'" But the point was that it is no longer necessary to walk onto Madison Avenue or Worth Avenue or Rodeo Drive to enter the world of fine gemstones.

And that was just as well. As a rule, QVC shoppers do not live near such significant addresses and do not want to



QVC's hosts, dressed in QVC style, on top of the QVC boxes.

The Joan Rivers Collection has generated more than \$60 million since 1990. "It's still déclassé," says Rivers. "Infomercials are the bottom of the barrel. But it wasn't too déclassé for Barry Diller to jump in."

"I wouldn't go to Worth Avenue," says a QVC shopper for whom the most simple sale sold on QVC, a size 38—equivalent to size 44—needs to be a little snug. "Salespeople don't expect me to spend money and don't rush to my side. I would feel out of place. I would feel ignored."

And as, before, QVC is everything else, so the redemption and revenge of the same "little people," Laura Holseney, so heartlessly scorned, people whose hard work brings in an average family income of \$40,000, who relax by watching *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* and reruns of *Dynasty* and other programs that have long enabled them to calibrate their precise position in the social scheme.

IN A SHOPPING-CRAZED, preformed, celebrity-worshipping culture, nothing could be more grimly inevitable than the advent of celebrity product. QVC is the proud purveyor of George Hamilton anti-aging systems and Marie Curie's collector dolls with porcelain faces and feet and Richard Gere's *Duel*-*À-Mort*. It also supplied a venue for Charlton Heston, "the man most associated with the Bible," whose fourth scheduled QVC appearance was canceled when three sheets proved enough to dispose of his entire stock of Charlton Heston Presents the Bible, in which Moses reads from the Bible and discusses the Holy Land from locations within the Holy Land itself. This special-for-Christmas offer could have, a QVC official confides, "an Easter re-run."

Then there is Joan Rivers, who began at QVC four years ago, shortly after being fired from her talk show at Fox TV by QVC's current chairman, Barry Diller, who was in those days the chairman of Time Warner, where her job was dressing up windows at Lord & Taylor, began the Joan Rivers Classic Collection in 1990 with a two-foot strand of pearls and went on to feature thousands of pieces presented to her by her late husband, Edgar.

Like all celebrity artists, Rivers rarely exploits that entire sense of closeness that everyday people feel toward someone whose voice has bounced off the cork walls of their TV rooms and whose life has become a reality rather through the pages of *People* and the *Top Gun*. "May this piece of jewelry bring happiness to you and yours," reads the card accompanying each purchase. The cards are signed, "With love, Joan Rivers."

Though another QVC saleswoman, the actress Victoria Principal, has presented a mere six million, it may be that no seller is more persuasive. Principal's products are "systems" for hair and skin that are, as she explains, "for anyone who cares about hygiene," as who as we do not?

The profits potential at QVC has proved sufficient to override the acres established early on that the endeavor was déclassé. "It's still déclassé," says Joan Rivers. "Infomercials are the bottom of the barrel. But it wasn't too déclassé for Barry Diller to jump in."

The bald, middle-aged Diller has evolved, in the unlikely way that media heroes are anointed these days, into QVC's most glamorous celebrity, among it his office in a black sedan driven by the security guard who ferries him from his private plane to the investment in the shopping channel in January 1993 when QVC stock, which is traded on NASDAQ, to \$40 from \$15.

And though the media who dropped temporarily during Diller's failed no-billion bid to acquire Paramount, he re-



maini entrenched as one of those corporate figures whose every move is detailed on business, society, and gossip pages, which keep America abreast of Dilley's dealings with Henry Kissinger and dinners with Jack Szabo of the New York City Ballet.

Most often, he is accompanied by Diane Von Furstenberg, his friend of eighteen years, a fashion designer who revitalized her career by selling soap and perfume pots on QVC. Von Furstenberg's celebrity is owed to a brief marriage to an American prince and to the design of a wrap dress that sold three million pieces, which she modeled on the cover of *Newsweek* in the spring of 1980.

Dilley's own career began in the midwest at Wilbur Munn on El Camino Drive in Beverly Hills, the city where he was raised. It led to the chairmanship of Paramount and Fox, an meteoric rise of the late Donald Trump would later make that of a section of real estate who started out with plenty and ended up with none.



FEEL THE BURN: Host Bob Schwartz prepares an on-air, low-end treat while a nervous Richard Blumenthal prays for a sale

DILLEY'S QVC IS NOT to be confused with the original twenty-four-hour shopping station, Home Shopping Network, a lower-end endeavor with a hard-sell approach that seems to target the audience of born-again prayer messages. "Thank you, darke," for nice! time to call and share your good news with everybody," one caller was told by a host whose dyed-blond hair was slicked in a monstrosity behind.

But QVC is not quite up to the level of shopping channels of the future, like the one to be launched by Macy's or, potentially the one under consideration by MTV. Then

QVC's own scheduled spin-offs, QVC2 and QVC3, are geared to a more upscale and youthful audience. QVC3, which will feature "only brand names," is described as a "QVC genre release as a 'jewelryhouse for several distinctive shopping services'."

While QVC occupies that portion of the American media highway where the hostilities of Anthony Robbins collide with the heady exuberance of the early television program *Queen for a Day*, in actual address in 1995, Enterprise Drive, West Chester, Pennsylvania, a three-headed-thousand-square-foot brick building situated in what used to be a wheat field.

The "folks" at QVC, as they tend to call themselves, eagerly await my "upcoming on-site visit" while an invitation to lunch with the QVC public relations team includes an offer to "bestow some ideas." Questions to employees are met by offers to "help on your face-lifting session," to "bring you up to speed on some issues" and give you "ball-park figures."

A tour of QVC's headquarters, which house the broadcast studios, corporate office, and storage facilities, includes the quality-control lab, where employees "put the product through its paces," while a trip to the video-analyzing system, which makes high-magnification pictures of jewelry, produces the revelation that "a picture is worth a thousand words."

A visit to the making area provides a chance to see "where product is nurtured to the presentation cases," not to mention a glimpse of the cases themselves, baroque and gray velvet boxes for rings, necklaces, and bracelets, and boxes made of a sumptuous velvet called *Acornvel* for QVC's QVCs in a lifetime pieces, all neatly displayed like miniature tombstones on four tiny shelves with a locking glass door.

For although employees are encouraged to regard themselves as "a family" this is a family in which extreme nose waxes are nurtured against the problem some call "molding" and QVC staff men dubiously call "skunkage."

The spacier of shrinkage loans large to warehouses that store 32,000 yellow plastic bins filled with 30-henry herringbone chains and *Diamondique* rings, two to five samples of every item shown on air. All of which explains the goodness of the video camera, the metal detector, the laminated scene passes, the *Relex* clockpoints, the baggage inspection system, and the computerized records of each employee's hour results, weight. Clearly, it is not a simple matter to safeguard QVC from the mere unfettered yearning for things that accounts for its success.

IN QVC'S AMERICA, a drink is a strawberry daiquiri and gummy foods are Swedish meatballs on decorative toothpicks and celery stuffed with peanut butter. This is where every home is equipped with a washer-dryer, bought on time, the Betty Crocker cookbook, and the Bible. Living rooms are spaced up with Normie Rockwell prints and maple side tables from Ethan Allen's Country Crossing collection, while bedrooms are scented with QVC's *Freight* Patcha Verve, a sweet-smelling candle presented in



RALPH LAUREN 1992
DOUBLE RL RANCH

THE MEN'S FRAGRANCE BY RALPH LAUREN

LIVING

WITHOUT

BOUNDARIES



Burdines

QUIN TO ENJOY YOUR
WINTER FOR MEN



The Prince of QVC:
Steve Van Vleet/History

Some basic QVC recommendations: Don't sleep in your jewelry; when wearing jewelry, think of themes; that gold watch "is perfect for the guy who always has a super-smelling cologne on his personage."

a milk-covered glass trimmed with "imperfect gold bead."

It is where people recognize that there are "proper" ways to do things. Under such circumstances the elegant gesture can seem as important as it is elusive. And so coffee shops serve themselves with a jewelry garnish, and a QVC shopper devises a useful system for her recently purchased Enginair crystal pendant: "You put different-colored liquids in it," she explains, "for different-colored outfits."

This same anxiety to do things properly leaves QVC viewers vulnerable to recommendation. QVC hosts are eager to comply.

"I always like to recommend," says a host on *Home Gold*, "that people go the extra mile with their jewelry." Also recommended: Don't sleep in your jewelry, when wearing jewelry, think of themes, a gold watch "is perfect for the guy who sleeps in a super-smelling cologne on his personage," a Diamondaire chair might go well with "a religious person's" desk, or might be "the perfect complement to where your spouse is already going in his jewelry wardrobe."

Once upon a time, QVC's America gathered its standards and notions of behavior from the movies and the movie magazines. Modern Screen readers were shown Joan Crawford's "little black dress and indispensable earrings for evening," while also learning that "Joan Crawford says that a double thickness under the arms of dresses saves them." These helpful hints, cobbléd together by studio flacks, cleverly addressed America's mutually exclusive passions for glamour and thrift.

In precisely this spirit, a reasonable dinner jacket shown in black, navy, and royal on Ray Utter's *Dick & Dave* "is one of the great items . . . you remove the shoulder pads before you wash," while a Liz Sands leather bag is "luxurious yet practical."

Of course, these days, the average American can no longer study movies for lessons in how to talk, drink, and dress. Movies today are not like movies that starred Cary Grant in the Thirties and Forties. They are not about glamorous, contemporary, sophisticated figures, more often, they are about contemporary, sophisticated figures, or about glamorous figures from the past. Today's movies are, in a modest way, like the television series, glossy periodicals, and programs like the QVC Simple "If you don't have a four-poster bed," says its host, "that quilt will give you that fine House of Windsor, Dean & DeLuca look."

"Men love ruffles, men love femininity," says Kathy Levin as she hawks Joan Rivers' romantic ruffled blouse.

Then the arm is argued sweaters: "Men love sweaters," Rivers allows.

You see that QVC's America is the America Delé Carrière cautioned in *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. "Then look," prompted Carnegie's jacket copy, will "get you out of a mental rut . . . enable you to make friends quickly and easily . . . increase your popularity." That, essentially, is

what QVC promises, too, though in that truth-in-advertising age, such felicitous benefits can hardly be implied.

For each cheerful aside toward a better life (the sale of a confederate man is an important piece of jewelry . . . "nothing goes down in value when you're talking Elvis"), and such attempts at lapping borders of class (buy that 100 percent wool, corded leather "if you want to look hip-top at the office") simply confirm that America has cannot be gotten out of.

TO UNDERSTAND THE phenomenon of QVC, you need only consider its context. Refer, for instance, to the recent afternoon when, at the very moment QVC viewers were being informed that "Cousins Halliwellworth is Family Hills Gold," *Don't TV* was broadcasting the trial of Jesus Perez, a former priest, who pleaded guilty to molesting twenty-eight children, channel 5 featured a psychic who calls herself *Avonita Bonanza*, and a host on the *9 o'Clock* was questioning a guest identified as "nasty by a lesbian mother."

"At what point did you realize that your mother had relations with other women? When you were fourteen and walked in on her?"

In this moment, it would be pretty to think that better being is available through shopping by telephone.

But then, you do not need to sleep to enjoy what QVC has to offer. "I live alone," claims self QVC host, "and even if I'm not buying, you keep me company."

This talking on the line to QVC, a woman who had called into the *Jewelry Showcase* excitedly told her daughter "I'm on television!" Then she turned back to the QVC host. "QVC gives you so much of what people secretly want," she told him. "A moment of time."

After all, people have always shopped for a sense of security and assurance that money cannot buy. And ultimately, QVC is less about the products it sells than about the world it portrays, where smiling salespeople are introduced in their store KVV show *Live with Fred* agency, suggesting what you might purchase, not so they might earn commissions—for QVC's salespeople do not earn commissions—but so that they might attain the requisite joy and status.

In that sense, QVC hosts are less like merchants than like the Miss Manners of their day, complete with off-the-cuff dialogue worthy of Sinclair Lewis when he was critiquing the *Restaurants of New York* and *Elgin*.

"Our area of accomplishments at QVC is almost as big as where the clothes are," says Bob Bowdoin, "because the people here understand you should have a rape chain, you should have a hemorrhoid, you should have a diamond on. Mmmmm."

"Representations are so important in the business world."



Aiello poses: At one time, she can give you hell

Joy Aiello of Elizabeth, New Jersey, bought an 8mm video camera on QVC. "It wasn't until this item arrived," she says, "that I realized I have no desire to make movies. But I feel guilty about sending it back."

says a host about selling a radiant *Diamondique* square-cut man's ring, in 10-14k gold. "They determine if you get that confirmation or get that job. And jewelry could give him that extra boost."

This general, encompassing neighborliness is a favorite of the Americans you might have expected to someday inhabit in those long-lost innocent days when you were young and dreaming of the future and the world was kind. QVC's universe is an orderly place where there is only reliable promise—selection, purchase, delivery—and, through it, an opportunity to make faith in the catalog and sensible progress of cause and effect.

As a result, QVC affords more than instant gratification. It offers instant refinement, the comforting of the

office in that *Armani* or *Brooks Brothers* suit and he's looking into the camera with that I-know-what-I'm-doing look on his face, because he's going to be wearing a ring right here"—with points to her jewelry—"and he may be a real diamond. But with *Diamondique* you can't tell the difference."

In that world, dreams are within reach and class barriers are instantly negotiable. For example, *Vogue* and *Elle* models, *Francesca* Kugler notes, have her with "pout." "But you're not born with pout," she hastily adds.

"Oh, no," says Kugler, shaking her head emphatically. "Pout is something you learn."

And, indeed, much can be learned on QVC, where product information is a major attraction. Which helps explain why hosts are so intent on making their programs opportunities for interested people to learn interesting things. "All of recorded history is only six thousand years old," viewers are told during a discussion of an amber-bead watch. "And this is six times recorded history."

Seriously, we learn that silver is called the friendly metal and that *Shibui* sparse described gold as sexy seducing. "It was referring to the fact," explains Bob Bowerman, "that the one thing people have always wanted is gold."

"I've been advising you for a long, long time, Bob," a caller tells Mr. Bowerman. "I love all the knowledge you give us."

"Well, I'm a voracious reader," Bob Bowerman modestly replies.

But nothing is more beneficial to QVC than the tendency of many Americans to stay at home, to "cocoon," in the terms coined by Faith Popcorn, a trend predictor who is described by Doug Briggs, QVC's president of electronic marketing, as "a visionary who has her finger on the pulse."

From the perspective of QVC, co-opting means that America's homes are acquiring a veritable army of would-be shoppers who are worried, intimidated, and deflated by the prospect of costly antiques, the specter of hostile fellow buyers, and sudden, random violence in parking lots.

"What are you doing today?" the host of *Jewelry Under \$100* asks Jeanne from Madison, Wisconsin, on a mild winter day.

"Well," says Jeanne, "I'm lubricating."

"What do you do when you're lubricating?"

"I watch TV."

"Did you order the necklace, Jeanne?"

Jeanne did. And this is the unique achievement of QVC as a society for endorsing passivity with an active component.

JOY AIELLO OF ELIZABETH, New Jersey, started shopping from QVC in 1988. Like many QVC devotees, she listens to the *Silver Howl* and *Trends in Gold* while paying bills or doing dishes. Only one store has disappointed her: earrings that proved far lighter than anticipated. "That was before I learned about gram weights," she says.

For years of ordering from QVC, she supplied Aiello with two *Research-It's* tassels, a gold locket from the Joan Street Classics Collection, a stainless-steel-silver bar stem, power bands for exercising that she has not unpacked, and the type of cuckoo clock she saw and couldn't afford when she visited Germany in 1984, which arrived from QVC with no many instructions and *always* as printed on its cardboard container that she never unpacked it.

Joy Aiello is a social worker. She lives with and cares for her disabled father, who believes his daughter is "crazy" when it comes to buying things.

Because of her father, Aiello can't often get out to shop. In any case, she is not always treated well at stores. "As the malls have upped," she says, "they make it more and more uncomfortable for those of us who haven't."

Joy Aiello is, in certain respects, the quintessential QVC shopper. She makes purchases that she describes as "not always rational."

"I am convinced that they'll make me happier, better," she says. "And they don't."

Aiello is attached to QVC in numerous ways, one of which is through its hosts. "Get a life," she tells herself, but that did not stop her from feeling "devoured" when hosts Jeffrey Henson and Judy Crowell filed for divorce.

Like all shoppers, Joy Aiello has dark episodes that cause her to question her addiction, but lapses occasioned by the frozen video camera she bought from QVC for \$1,000, ordered from \$1,600, which came with a free battery pack and carrying case.

She put it on Easy Pay (two to five installments) because, otherwise, her credit card would have refused it. "But it wasn't until this item arrived," says Aiello, "that I realized I have no desire to make movies. I told QVC I was to send it back. They said they would take it back. But I feel guilty about sending it back. It's almost like returning a gift. They're willing to give it to you so cheaply, how could you not want it?"

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK, you don't have to hope," says a host. "You can have the look of a diamond you could never dream to afford. You can have the ring in *Diamondique*." If you want to see QVC's sold, watch the *Diamondique* Host. This is the program that affirms, as one of its several hosts promises, "that look of a diamond that the Elizabeth Taylor and the Prince Charles of the world can buy, but not as regular people."

"Why spend all that time at work thinking, Oh, look at what I just had me," another host wonders. "You can have that piece you always dreamed of, without thinking, *Maybe I got a bonus, maybe I got a second job, maybe I'll win the lottery*."

In other words, consumerism's holy grail is really on the wealthy, who foolishly overpay for items that are indistinguishable from their copies. "Can you tell the difference between a natural emerald and a simulated emerald?" a host asks. "Probably not."

This is democracy's final turn of the screw: achieving equality through the simple assertion that there is no difference between the real and the fake, which means you need never feel cheated that you cannot afford things, since whatever you cannot afford is actually worthless.

"Diamonds," with a QVC host with a diamond grin. "No matter how you slice it, it comes up the same. They're expensive, and then you have to insure them."

Which is to say that the implied ethic of QVC provides a new slant on the familiar doctrine. Living well is the best revenge. But, as it turns out, the best revenge is not necessarily living well. Turning to live well is the best revenge.

But ultimately the joke is on the "little people," as jokes in this society usually are. For what QVC finally promises with its twenty-four-hour broadcasting, to Easy Pay and its soft-hard sell is a nation of overworked, over-billed people mourning their state of self and well-being to numerous, stackable, more and more outrageous demands, pleasures they cannot afford and, perhaps, do not really want, which is, of course, the phenomenon on which commerce has always relied.

Every committed shopper is aware that merchandise is the ultimate placebo, but only for a while. "Do you find that *Beauty Hills Gold* is kind of like farming?" a viewer is asked—a query we must assume to be rhetorical.

And so it continues. 4.7 million viewers at any given time. Each of them praised for the fourth anniversary of *Beauty Hills Gold*. Trends in Silver. Something to add to your wish wardrobe. A multi-moonstone watch with stones in every color and design. Because we're talking pearls.

The perfect place for day-to-evening in cranberry or taupe, plaid or solid, all designed to tempt Thelma in Indianapolis and Bonnie in Jackson, Mississippi, to make purchases that are unaffiliated with necessity or greed, since the world of QVC revolves on one basic supposition: Everyone needs everything.

In pursuit of that idea alone, the folks at QVC never lose sight of the task at hand. "You had to arrange the funeral," the host of an *Elvis* special says to Joe Esposito, Elvis's road manager and the man who administered CPR to Elvis's corpse on the bathroom floor at Graceland.

"Yes," says Joe Esposito. "It was a very hard time in my life."

"Yeah, I'll be." Gravitating into the camera, the host picks up another item. "Here's this *Elvis Presley* game-shaped music box that plays 'Love Me Tender.'" he says.

For finally, at QVC, all life issues are treated with equal weight, and all concerns are reduced to the simple matter of to buy or not to buy, as was the case on the afternoon that *eladika* walked away "today's special value at a cost of 100.95."

"What's the shape and status of your wallet at this point?" the host asks a woman who has called in to order one for her brother.

"Mine is closed," says the woman.

"What about your mom and your daughters?"

"Well, my mom's gone now," the woman replies, "and my daughters have their own wallets." ■



GUT 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT: A QVC employee reads tests the merchandise. In this case, a \$19.95 fire-dug metal alarm.

unwieldy probe through the simple act of determining what to buy and when in your order to 1-800-345-1515. In the process, you enter a world that is interactive, and not just with the good folks at QVC, but with your own self, and self. "When you open a magazine," a host on the *Diamondique* Host says one day, "and there is a big picture of a CEO, chances are when he's in the hallway-walked

We prove that money not only talks, it writes, dances, and takes photographs. Here's what a crisp one-hundred-dollar bill will buy from some of the finest minds in the culture.

THE C-NOTE PROJECT

We sent the following letter to several estimable authors, artists, and other creative types

We're approaching a number of fine practitioners of the various arts—fiction, music, poetry, dance, drama, criticism, photography of colors—with commissions of one hundred dollars each.

Why are we doing it? Just to see what

we get. But even you'll find a one-hundred-dollar bill. If you accept the commission, this is your payment. If you decline, please send the money back.

*Bill Board
Senior Editor*

And here's what we got

MARTIN AMIS, AUTHOR

IF it had been a cheque I would have flung it back in your face with a tearful sneer of integrity (21). But there is something about cash, particularly American cash ... (30). In my last novel I described a man waking up in a garden - an ironic paradise (47): 'I saw curled flame swooping and trembling, like pulses or soft explosions in the side of the head. And a circumscribed pale green, barred and embossed with pale light, like ... like American money' (80). \$100 buys you 100 words (85). Or a gram of coke (90). But you'll be sending the bill to scriff it with (100).

(Please retain the bracketed numbers, of course.)

With love, Martin,

Martin Amis



"Unsolved Mysteries": A Story Fragment

SHE WAS WAITING for Joak to bring the to-go cup kids out from the stage in the back. She kept one eye on a man with a little boy sitting in the booth by the far window. "It'll just be another account, Joe." "No problem." One thing about Joe: He was patient. She'd been watching the man with the little boy since they came in. Unsolved Mysteries was her favorite show now, and she looked at everybody a little differently since she'd started watching it. It had changed everything, really. A show by the side of the road was now an enormous marker of a stranger's possible tragedy, not their ordinariness, as she used to think.

Sometimes, when she caught a glimpse of a word or a phrase, she'd see not what was written but something else, a meaning, a kind of insidious dyslexia. And what she saw the first time the show came on TV was *Unsolved Mysteries*.

Joe took a seat on a stool and started reading the Metro section. The rape-and-murder section, he called it. One thing about Joak: He was slow as Christmas. That's probably how he got his name.

She wondered if the little boy was being kidnapped by his natural father and if maybe there wasn't a mother somewhere about to go crazy with worry. She walked over and poured more coffee in the father's cup.

"Mother's day, no?" she said.

He looked up, not hearing her right, and said, "Good."

Her greatest desire was to solve a mystery for *Unsolved Mysteries*. She'd added the 800 number to the speed dial of the phone here, one that didn't have a label. A lot of people came in and out of here. You never know. She hoped that she could solve one of the "Lost Lovers," so she could be part of that happy reunion, or one of the "Missing Persons." But she would have been happy to solve anything, even one of the "Frost" or "Marilyn" ones. She could be happy with that.

Joe was already drinking his coffee to go, and she filled his cup again.

"Anything good?" she asked.

"Fish. Well, let's see..."

They had the same sense of humor. She'd say, "Read me something good," and he'd read about a double homicide or a sexy postal worker spitting a place with megalomaniac fire, and she'd say, "That's sweet." They'd tell each other their heads. Happiness.

She liked to see Joe come in. She thought that he was probably a very lonely guy. A lonely guy with a lonely job. He was a security guard for an office park. He mostly sat on the gate booth and pushed the button for the cars to go up and down and let the cars in and out. She'd never seen him at work, but he seemed like the kind of guy to give a friendly wave if he knew you. People probably appreciated having a guy like this.

The little boy was sliding the salt and pepper shakers back and forth, flipping them from hand to hand with his chin on the table. The father reached out and caught them mid-fly and put them back by the sugar holder.

"Hey," she said. "You think he's that little boy's daddy or not?"

Joe glanced over. "Fish. He is," he said. "Look at the kid. See how he's acting? Kids only act that goofy with their parents. Gotta look for the details, Charmaine. It's always the little things that'll give it away." Joe was smart.

She had always been suspicious. She probably should have gone into police work. She still could. It's not too late. She stopped solving anything, little puzzles, little mysteries. Like if somebody lost something, someone she knew well, she could usually find it. She'd just reason it out. There was always a reason, even if it was a stupid one.

Once when she was eight, her uncle was leaving to go to Gulf Shores for the weekend, but the guy who was going to cover his shift got sick and called her mom 'cause Uncle Ray's phone was disconnected again. So she and her mom and her older brother hopped in the car and sped over to his house. It was just starting to rain and when they got to the house the car was wet as the driveway. Even said, "It's a flood," but Charmaine said, "No, look, it's just where the car was, so let's just left, we can catch him on the interstate." And they did. Her mom told everybody this story for a long time after, and Uncle Ray kidded her and said that she was too smart for her own good. This talent, she felt, ran in her spine.

Charmaine figured she was like this because of her mother. Although her mother certainly wasn't any good at solving mysteries. She couldn't even solve the mystery of who was the father of her two oldest children. Once, she heard a private detective to try to find the guy she thought might be her son's daddy, but they never found him. She'd taken in love with the detective though. She said he was the one true love of her life, but nothing ever happened. He was married with kids of his own and he told her it was a shame he hadn't met her first, at least he thought that sometimes. But she figured that part of the reason she lived here was that he was a decent man. A good and decent man, so hard to find. Impossible in her case, and in fact if there was a salaried fix finding men who would let her down, then she was a true saint. She had hoped this ability would not rub off on her daughter, and so far, it had not. Her second child was the most well-read of all her children, the most philosophical about the repeated abandonment of her mother by various male types who, for momentary approval only to her, had at one time or another seemed promising. Charmaine had never held this against her.

This was not the case with her son, the eldest, who had taken the loss of his father, and several other neurologists, quite hard. He was angry beyond his ability to feel it. And he was never able to hide his longing, which the more acutely deserved for having been left so many times. Her son had grown into the type of man that suspected that all women were finally flawed, and that with constant vigilance, you could expose it and save yourself from being scarred by someone unworthy. He was repulsed by need. Consequently, most of the women in his life had come to hate him, and for this he blamed his mother too.



In the performance space of his choice—(the strange) close of Dupont's fashion department—Mark Morris (in overalls) choreographs dancers Jane O'Neil, Guillemette Lemaire (with her), and Kaitiaki Peterson, members of the Mark Morris Dance Group.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW FRANKS



To Bill Tvoril, -

Great idea - how can
anyone turn damn cash in the
mail? (It makes you wonder-
have we over- or under-estimated
our time or worth?) Just
for the record - this was the
3rd polka-dot I took (the others
sucked). Thanks!
Cindy Sherman



Thank you for the assign-
ment + this is what you get
for a \$100.-

Annotation of an Unpublished Fantasia

IN THE SPRING of 1978, having secured an anonymous sponsor, the Subject mailed against a money order a hundred dollars' worth of marijuana at his portable typewriter. He produced a document that in three single-spaced pages in long-lie began:

There is a little agency behind all forced surrenders of fiery-hair and pomp-cornet concrete.

See how close there are preliminary inter-
courses of a double-surrender.

A logic of the corn, cemetery of outer crust. Changing plumes in manuscript. Maintenance of pen-
sionable. Held on to the corn
roots. Pucker lenses in darkness,
surrender, superposition of the lymphatic
spinal asymmetries.

A faint further in the Subject accedes
adly-hunching logic.

Odd, dual possession of pain
veins upward to mind chambers, and
through the physical lenses of mental
enables. A white veil of pain, but
centered, double. Change through further,
more thoughtful patterns. Get it
normal before it fails, or spinal loca-
tions into the gaze. It failed. Told it
for to mid-shift memory blossoms.

The Subject then attempts to analyze his
interior state.

I am not so much speechless, as
placing further the northern pedestal.
Chosen the memory switching house.
Dissolved focuses the loss necessarily
but the rose growth. A growth, head-
down, impact, total conjunction,
in-dwelling mechanisms, though choice
overcomes the wilderness. Corn lig-
aments of time-crop. Changed vivid
diagrams of power-hungry texture blossoms,
of cold transcriptions, room or verb?
Nevertheless the chance apostles of
hope. Oh, Joyce, you and Arizona. I see
your blood here now Arizona winks.
Chatter globe windows, mild prolifer-
ations. Debog the proliferations!

The Subject goes on to spell out exactly
what is a rule.

The courts of grannies mean the
apocryphal surrealist. West-
pocket parks of error. Or, perhaps,
conspiracy, victims of further in-

village. Victims of the sea cathode.

The Subject's spiritual has fallen asleep
on the couch, and a sorry about donating
her with the sound of his typing momentarily
surrendered to his reflections.

But death movements occur, and if
so, how can she sleep with some
sound to noise.

Immediately, however, the Subject re-
presents himself for the use of an archive
construction like death.

Take care to avoid those firm-
mental contours. Which? double legs.
But I'm afraid and break him. And so
word the available. A mouth of re-
ligious. I'm afraid a primer and more in-
ter-venor. Tense the tongue as a
certain source of thematic creation.
more. Detest the relief of stratification,
because only of the night's purple.

The Subject begins to copy himself.

Extend outdoors all immobility
space the general curve. Drunken soil
squares of space. Mailed movements.
Seasoned interlocking. Dense near
vision. A tongue eruptions, oxygen
less, holding, muted youth distillation.
Change deduction of patented
playthings. Pull those cotton shadow-
pockets into the light. Find the newer
pasture. Flooded with light, the
eye-familiar chains cut the night.
Held with morose polings, rescue
copy at plaything use. Try again, Oh,
willow night!

Soon though the Subject has some
doubts about the method's suitability of when
he is doing.

Certain it hinders, and writes not
later like intermissions can't break. Be-
gin high gain drift bars. Allow per-
missible to photograph to brassiness
into health arrangements. Wishing
natural surroundings.

And yet, by the bottom of page one the
Subject has regained his characteristic cheer.

All goes well. Pomme studies.
Tantal mannequins field northern to
read light blue painted womanhood, and
misapprehended fifth. Bleeding the apple
blossoms of the event. Nourish her
anguish cataplexis. Change the arm of
apocryphal blindness. A note of
future unreadables. Crisis springing
Or no.

Several remain leave the Subject again
because again that he is not quite himself. He
wonders if he is perhaps "looking."

While signals of final phrase ache.
Mystery shrills grows filtered and
void. Illusions sheds its pendulous
depths. One more canopy to finer
concentrations. Too powerful to con-
tain such mental losses. Muted
haze migrant voices. Told mystery
might come devour since brigand de-
vours. Signature of literary. Time
space dissolves, rampant disavowed.
Charged prophets of upward d'oloments.
No higher conversion possible,
the myths of disorder cannot count
form dog blossoms oyster rose.

In hopes of entering his mind, the Sub-
ject smokes the last of the marijuana. He is
moved to reflect further on the possible dis-
crepancy of his girlfriend.

Pink spraying wound, home encoun-
terments. Pinned awareness sub-
acquaint from loneliness. And ac-
cording the double of comparisons.
Love delays a pull at childhood cult
vocuous. Swarms of bedeviled blas-
tation, or more afternoon broken moral
flashes. Ah, Sanderlessky Post Mar-
garet who both in the blue of the
poured couch, space feels her leg and
the man too all woken. Thus quench
their interior field frenzy.

Then he is distressed by some physical
symptoms:

But tremors persist, and women,
and failure begins to infect larger wor-
men. How do feelings gain themselves
to appearance? competent? No one
cared to these ends.

Increasingly confused, his face hanging
as such above the, hope of his appearance,
the Subject enters himself to carry on with his li-
tary office.

Too dead insensitivity or cramp
in sleep? Find the later third-wake
surrealisms time deflected. Demonstrate
the dream terror vagueness.

But the spell has inevitably passed.
Clenchings in shadows. Vision
reverses. Shown all congealed field
going functions or rather hope needs.

That depicted the Subject concludes
with a note of small optimism.

Keep willing the cool intervention.



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And the Truth Shall Set Him Free.

Or Will It?

Benjamin La Guer won't give up until he's convinced every journalist and civil libertarian that he didn't commit the rape for which he's been imprisoned for eleven years. He makes a compelling case. Almost.

BY JOHN TAYLOR

What is God's name in this country coming to when a man can no longer get off a few harmless cracks about "spice"? After all, just because you can play the occasional spice joke doesn't mean you're prejudiced. If, say, you're on a jury and you infer, lightheartedly, to the man whose fate you're deciding as a spice, that doesn't mean you're going to be more inclined to find him guilty. You'll weigh the evidence and then convict or acquit on the basis of that evidence, regardless of whether the man's a spice or, for that matter, a wop, reuk, wop, dog, hunk, coon, dope, chugue, towelhead, wet-back, or nup. He will get a fair trial.

Then, more or less, was the thinking of one Joseph Nevsk, a member of the all-race,

all-white jury that, in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1984, convicted a young Hispanic man named Benjamin La Guer of rape in a trial that sent him to prison for life. "The golden-haired spice is guilty just saying these—look at him. Why bother having the trial?" another juror murmured. Nevsk stayed quiet before opening arguments. Then, during jury deliberations, when one member had wondered aloud how it could be possible that, as the victim had testified when she took the stand, the rape could have gone on for eight hours, Nevsk reportedly said, "Spice screw all day and night."

Seven years after La Guer was found guilty, the presiding judge summoned jurors, lawyers, and the prisoner himself to a hearing to discuss these alleged comments. Taking the

Rape of innocence: La Guer makes one hundred collect calls a day to tell his tale of the story.



witness stand, Novak, a retired steelworker, sounded alarmingly unsteady in light of the fact that he had helped plot someone away for life. He told the judge he had been the jury foreman when he hadn't. He and the jury had included women who he hadn't. He also denied making the epic comments "I never heard of that word, sir," he said. "The only place I ever knew was Spac to Spac."

Novak then complained that everyone had become far too sensitive about this business of ethnic slurs. He himself, he explained, had been called a "dirty Polish" when he was a grammar school "The kids weren't used to call dirty Polish—whatever nationality—'dirty Irish,' 'dirty wop,' 'dirty Irish.' That wasn't considered an ethnic slur then, because the kids usually made up." People are so much more sensitive now, Novak lamented. "Today you can take a slight dig at a nationality and it's considered an ethnic slur," he said. "Everything is so charged so much today."

THE JUDGE DIDN'T seem to think it was that big a deal, either. Without even hearing from more than half the jurors, he declared that the allegation of jury bias was "unsubstantiated" and sent La Guer back to prison, where he remains today. That decision outraged a host of legal-advocacy groups. The Harvard Law School's Criminal Justice Institute, the Civil Liberties Union Foundation, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the Anti-Defamation League, and a number of other organizations have all sided with La Guer in his appeal to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, which has yet to make a ruling.

But the issue of a fair trial aside, there is persuasive evidence that La Guer did not in fact commit the crime for which he was convicted—the brutal sexual assault of an elderly woman. While that evidence was never presented at the original trial, it theoretically could have been presented, and so has never provided sufficient grounds for an appeal court to overturn the jury's verdict. La Guer will be eligible for parole after serving fifteen years. But because he continues to insist on his innocence, his parole board—which, like most such boards, prefers repetitive prisoners—might not ever let him out.

Since his conviction, La Guer has served most of his time at Gardner state prison in central Massachusetts. Gardner was previously a mental institution, and, in an odd, almost gothic coincidence, the woman who accused La Guer of raping her has had a history of mental illness and was once a patient there herself. She walked the same tiled halls, looked out the same windowless windows. But that is only one of many ironies in the La Guer case. It also provides a complementary counterpart to the Black male equities established in the saga of the Menendez brothers. While the rich seem to be able to get away with homicide these days, those without wealth are unable to establish their innocence even when it seems justice, both made in their own ways, demonstrate, has been subverted by commerce. Freedom, it would seem, is less a right than a commodity.

A focused narrative line and a clear object lesson are what make for a good "true story." But the *perennial* search for such truth may be frustrating. Most black-on-black rape cases simply don't fit the formula of narrative: one veracious storytelling requires it's too incoherent, it's full of contradictions, it lacks a satisfying resolution, it's ultimately unsatisfiable.

La Guer's case, when I first heard about it, seemed different, it followed the narrative convention of the falsely imprisoned innocent. And unlike almost every other unfairly imprisoned convict—who may be in prison because of some procedural flaw but who did commit the crime he is accused of, or who did something worse that he got away with, or who is in some other way utterly repulsive—La Guer is a genuinely sympathetic person. He has an engaging personality. The energy with which he has called support and pursued his appeals is remarkable, even inspiring, and he has become something of a cause célèbre in Massachusetts. It all made for a compelling, relatively straightforward true story. Or so his supporters said.

BENJAMIN LA GUER WAS BORN and raised in the South Bronx. Both his parents were Puerto Rican immigrants who had been married previously. His father, Luperio, worked on a road crew for a construction company. In the late Seventies, Ben's parents drifted apart, and Luperio moved to Los Angeles, a slightly dilapidated rail town on the hills of central Massachusetts, in live-in care of his daughters from his first marriage. Ben was with him.

Not exactly a young man of great promise, Ben dropped out of school at sixteen to join the Army. He was briefly assigned to study communications, but a bad stutter, which had afflicted him the nickname El Guero in childhood, made it difficult for him to express himself when excited, and he was switched to refrigeration repair. After three years of service, he was caught selling a small quantity of hashish and, in June of 1981, received a general discharge.

Ben returned to Los Angeles and moved into his father's apartment in a converted factory next to a polluted creek. He had been back there weeks when, around a noon on the morning of July 15, the police knocked on the door. A call had been made himself as Detective Ronald Cargano and told Ben the police wanted to talk to him.

"You mean about the old lady next door?" La Guer asked. The detective nodded.

Ben did not know the woman well. She was in her late fifties. She had wavy hair and a square jaw, was slightly heavy, and wore glasses. He had nodded to her coming in and out of the apartment. Twice he'd noticed she had left her keys in his lock and he had pointed this out to her. She had been late to say and seemed to spend most of her time by herself. Occasionally she carried a crumpled-bagged folding chair out to the front porch and sat there for hours.

By July 15, everybody in the building knew that, three nights before, the woman had been brutally raped. She had told the police she had been lying in bed, sitting at her table, drinking a cup of tea, at 5:00 in the evening, when a muscular black man suddenly appeared in the apartment. He was, she said, nude except for a pair of long white socks. He threw her on the ground and began hitting her, then pulled her legs apart so violently she felt he might dislocate her hips. His breath had a foul, rotten odor. For the next eight hours, he raped and sodomized her. She did not think a man could keep it up so long, she told the police, but he never stopped. He also hit her, told her he loved her, threatened to murder her if she cried out, placed a plastic bag over her head, pulled the rings off her fingers, and took her handbag, which had some dollars in cash and three dollars in change, before he finally left.

Neighbors had heard her cries at 5:00 A.M. and called the police. They arrived they found the woman lying on her back nude, her hands and feet tied together as tightly with electrical cord that some of the officers had to use his folding knife to free her. The woman's right eye was closed tight. The entire right side of her face was bruised and swollen. Her jaw was fractured, she had blood on her hands and face. "This is one of the most vicious sexual assaults on a potentially fragile and vulnerable person that I have ever seen," Robert Mulliken, the judge who tried the case against Ben La Guer, would say later.

Detective Cargano asked La Guer to come down to the station. He readily complied. "I thought they were going to take me when I lived about here," he now says. At the station, Cargano told La Guer he could have a lawyer. La Guer said he didn't need one. The detective began nudging him. His Miranda rights La Guer said he was familiar with. Then Cargano then told La Guer he had a certain resemblance to the description the woman had given of her attacker. The detective asked if he could photograph him. La Guer agreed.

After the picture was taken, with a Polaroid, Cargano grabbed up eight other Polaroids of young, dark-skinned males, put La Guer's photograph in the middle of the stack, and then, while La Guer remained at the police station, took them to the hospital to show the victim. Half an hour later he returned.

"He identified you, immediately and without hesitation," he told La Guer.

AT THE TIME of his arrest, a public defender was appointed to represent La Guer. But he wanted his own lawyer. He called a relative who called another relative who recommended Peter Eisenberg, a criminal-defense attorney in Worcester. Benjamin had about \$2,000 that had come to him through the GI bill. He was planning to use it for college tuition. Instead, he wrote out a check to Eisenberg for the entire amount. Eisenberg's fee was 15,000, however. Luperio La Guer promised to pay the balance in installments.

Benjamin told Eisenberg he would not have assisted the woman between 9:00 and 5:00 on the night of July 15. His time during those hours was accounted for. He had had dinner with one of his sisters, Lisa Brown, then dropped by a



The photo lineup. While hospitalized, the victim identified La Guer (second from top, left-hand column) when police showed her eight Polaroids of "dark-skinned" men.

local bar called the Plymouth Cafe, where he had spent several hours drinking with people from the neighborhood. Around midnight, acquaintances gave him a ride in a red Chevy Nova to the apartment of a former girlfriend. She was not home, but other members of her family were there, watching a movie on videotape. After visiting with them for half an hour, he walked home.

Eisenberg hired Nancy Martinez, a member of a private investigative agency and a former cousin of Benjamin's, to take statements from these various adult witnesses. Unfortunately, as Martinez discovered, the Plymouth Cafe was a shady, somewhat respectable place. Right after dark on the night of July 15, the police had been called in to stop a brawl the very night of the rape. The bar's regulars included well-known drug dealers and other petty criminals. They were not, as a rule, interested in cooperating with any investigation that might require them to solve court appearances.

Ben Martinez did take statements from La Guer's sister Lisa, from two of the young men who had dinner with La Guer over in the apartment of his former girlfriend, and from the girlfriend's sister brother and neighbor. Unfortunately, the details of their statements conflicted somewhat with La Guer's account. Time acquiesces were contradictory. Gaps remained unfilled. As a group, the witnesses, all teenagers except for Ben's sister, were intimidated and uncooperative.

It seemed to Eisenberg entirely possible that, even if they testified, they would give more credence to the victim's personal identification of Ben. And if convicted, La Guer could receive life sentence. So Eisenberg worked out a plea bargain with the district attorney's office.

"I've got good news and bad news," La Guer remembers Eisenberg telling him in a telephone call shortly before the trial began. "The good news is, you're not going to get life; the bad news is, you are going to have to do some work." In exchange for pleading guilty to assault, Eisenberg explained, La Guer would be sentenced to a maximum of twenty years in Concord, the state's most comfortable prison, with the possibility of parole after a mere two years. This struck Eisenberg as an extremely good deal.

La Guer rejected it. He was, he insisted, innocent. With the trial scheduled to start in only a week, Eisenberg left for a vacation in Rhode Island. He did take Nancy Martinez's investigative report with him, but whatever homework he ac-

ly did so without La Guer's trial grand brief and preface story. Where Eitensberg expressed concern about the all-white jury, the judge brushed the question aside. The prosecution's main witness was the victim. She described the rape and bearing in horrifying detail. "I'm an old woman," she said at one point, testified that she had been raped out for a sexual attack. "Why am I an old woman?"

"Now, were you able to see the face of that person in your apartment?" James Lennane, the prosecutor, asked her. "Yes, I was."

"And when you saw that person's face, would you know who that person was?"

"Yes, I would."

"When you saw it that night when you were on the floor, did you know who it was?"

"Yes."

"And who do you know that person to be?"

"That sleep right there."

"And may I record reflect that she has pointed to the defendant, Peter Henner?" the prosecutor asked.

"Yes," the judge said.

Except for La Guer's sister Lisa, who said Benjamin had left her house around 9 p.m., Eitensberg did not call any of the witnesses interviewed by Nancy Marzetta. The night before the defense presented its case, a man named Miguel Gonzalez telephoned Eitensberg and told him he'd been at the Plymouth Cafe that night, had seen Benjamin there, and was willing to say so to the jury. Gonzalez had been sent to testify by a man named Ray Vazquez, the friend of La Guer's who owned the red Nova and who had been arguing with him at the bar but who, for reasons that remain anonymous, was unwilling to appear in court himself.

When Gonzalez entered the courtroom the next day, he gave Benjamin a high five—a casual gesture of solidarity that offended many of the jurors. "Where, he turned out to be an awful witness. He admitted during cross-examination that he knew La Guer only glancingly, hadn't seen him for years, had been sitting on the far side of the bar that night, and wasn't even exactly sure whether the night he'd seen La Guer at the Plymouth Cafe was the night of the rape. One member of the jury would have said that when jurors referred to Gonzalez as "a goddamned fool" and "a lying son of a bitch."

La Guer himself felt testified, but to no avail. The jury deliberated for three hours before returning a verdict of guilty. Prior to the sentencing, Lawrence Hipsman, a psychiatrist at the employ of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections, evaluated La Guer and declared that he "does not fit in a psychological or pathological profile of a person capable of committing this crime." Using that subterfuge, Eitensberg asked the judge for leniency. Benveniste, he pointed out, had no background of crime or violence. The judge rejected that logic. The crime, he remembered, was too horrifying for such considerations. "My function in this instance is the protection of society," he told La Guer. "On the aggravated rape. Lik-

THE NORTH CENTRAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION, in the town of Gardner, is just twenty minutes on Route 8 from Leominster. It is a handsome collection of old redbrick buildings with peaked roofs. The grounds are surrounded by tall, bare firs topped with coils of razor wire. Guards, in lawnmower and generally uniformly refer to the prison, at a medium-security facility, housing men who have committed

violent crimes but are not considered violent, such as William Douglas, the obese Tufts University professor who became obsessed with and assaulted a young Boston prostitute in 1981.

Ben La Guer has been imprisoned there since 1985. When I went to visit him in February, he was waiting in a sparsely visited room with large windows that overlooked the snowbound yard. At the date of his arrest he was 30, nearly 5'10", but in the last decade years he has gained weight. He has a small head, dark, closed eyes, and a few residual nose scars. His short black hair showed the first signs of gray.

Gardner, La Guer said, wasn't that bad, for a prison. The inmates have to run at 7 a.m. in the morning for a brief course and he back in their cells at 10 p.m. for bedtime. But he doesn't see any of the prison stuff whatever they want. Most play basketball or watch TV. La Guer spends his time at the law library or on the phone. He makes, he said, up to one hundred calls each day to lawyers, public-attorney advocates, and sponsors, and considers himself lucky if five are accepted. Since learning that I was interested in his case, he had begun calling me once and sometimes twice a day.

Although La Guer had shown few signs of emotional carnality before his conviction, once he was imprisoned he was seized with the desire to master the system that had put him away for the first year of his sentence. He had been sent to the north big, grim maximum-security prison at Walpole. There he read books like *Bad Advice* and *Legal Problems: Using Analysis, Research, and Writing*. One day, another inmate asked him to help draft a petition claiming ineffective counsel. The motion he wrote succeeded in reducing the man's sentence, and other inmates sought him out. La Guer began to charge for his services, anything from a carton of cigarettes up to \$200, depending on the research involved. His legal center also helped keep him out of trouble. "If people of influence—people who've killed a state trooper or people who listen to Sullivan make it in the library—are talking to you," he said, "other people will want you alone."

MOST OF THE TIME La Guer worked on his own appeal, which centered on the victim's history of mental illness. The day after the attack, police investigators had met with the victim's daughter, who'd said that when the woman was in the care of a mental-health clinic because she had had "a nervous breakdown about fourteen years ago and has not been right since." Her medical records showed she had been diagnosed as a schizophrenic. While the judge had ruled the woman's medical history irrelevant, it could of course have done her. Her solidarity. Furthermore, when the victim pointed out La Guer's photograph at the hospital three days after the rape, she was on eight drugs, including Demerol, a narcotic, and the antipsychotic medication Clozapine. And she was not even wearing her glasses.

Other evidence supported La Guer's claim of mistaken identity. When the woman initially described her attacker to the police, she said he was "very dark" and "a Negro." La Guer has an olive complexion. Among La Guer's distinguishing characteristics are his stature and the scar on a black Panther on his left arm. The woman mentioned neither of these, though she said her attacker had been nude, except for his white socks, and had talked to her constantly throughout the ordeal.

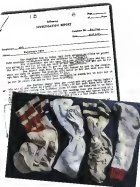
Furthermore, no forensic evidence linked La Guer to

the crime. The police did find a knife apparently belonging to the assailant, but they lost it. They also discovered a partial palm print in the woman's apartment, but it did not match La Guer's. The hospital where she was admitted had given the police a complete rape kit, which included pubic-hair clippings and vaginal swabs that contained seminal fluid, but they did not deliver it to the state laboratory for a week. By that time the enzymes in the fluid had deteriorated to the point where it was impossible to identify the DNA.

A year after La Guer was transferred to Gardner, an appellate court rejected his petition for a new trial. When the appeal was denied, La Guer fell into a depression and sought treatment for a psychiatric condition. One day he saw his own medical records on the psychiatrist's desk and looked through them. Among the information they contained was the fact that his blood was type B. Only two days later did La Guer realize the significance of this information.

On the night of the attack, the assailant had left a robe sock in the victim's apartment. The police had discovered several pairs of robe socks in the La Guer apartment, and this seemed to tie him to the crime. The sock from the victim's apartment was tested by the state forensic laboratory, which identified a perspiration residue that came from someone with type-O blood. Before the trial, from jail, La Guer gave a saliva sample that was tested for blood type. But the test proved inconclusive. As a result, the sock was never introduced into evidence. La Guer now says that at the time his blood type was tested, he mistakenly believed he had type-O blood and, at the suggestion of someone he knew, had mixed another inmate's saliva with his own to confuse the results. After seeing his medical records, he realized that, if he had given the authorities a legitimate saliva sample, the results would have provided evidence of his innocence rather than a false impression of guilt.

In August of 1986 La Guer placed a collect call to a reporter for the *Falmouth Massachussetts Sentinel* and persuaded him to write a series of articles about his case. On the basis of those articles, La Guer was able to attract advocacy groups and other supporters in his cause. In 1987 an Associated Press reporter named John King interviewed one of the jurors, William Nowick. During the interview King told Nowick about the information that Judge Mulliken had ruled inadmissible.



The evidence: Investigators felt that La Guer's robe socks, which were similar to one found in the victim's apartment, pointed to his guilt.

had convinced of his innocence, drew up an appeal arguing that he had not received a fair trial. Massachusetts's Supreme Judicial Court ordered Robert Mulliken, the original trial judge, to hold a hearing on the matter. It was at this proceeding that the juror Joseph Nowick made his complaints about overreactivity to other jurors.

The jury foreman also testified. He corroborated the gist of William Nowick's recollections about recent conversations during the jury's deliberations, but added that he didn't think they were "a big deal." Asked what the other jurors, his face disfigured, was quoted on a local television news show confirming that juror remarks had been made.

None of this impressed Judge Mulliken. He declared that William Nowick had made "wildly exaggerated" allegations only after "serious lobbying by advocates for La Guer" had convinced him the defendant was innocent. La Guer was denied a new trial.

GHOSTS NOW INHABIT the case of Benjamin La Guer. The real mischief—if we assume La Guer is innocent—has always been ghostly, a terrifying apparition who materialized in the victim's apartment one night, brutally raped and beat her, then vanished without a trace. Other players in the drama now have, in one fashion or another, disappeared as well. Ronald Carpinen, the detective who investigated the crime, is dead. James Lennane, the prosecutor who convicted La Guer, has gone into private practice. Judge Mulliken has retired. The victim is in a nursing

home. La Guir's alibi witnesses have scattered. He is the only one who has not relinquished his role. He remains alone on the stage, trapped in time, presenting about an event that long ago seemed once obvious.

By now he has dimmed his version of his case to one succinct declaration. The victim's mental illness, he says, explains the mistaken identity, the tube sock establishes his innocence, and the notion of some jurors explains why he was found guilty. After talking to as many people as I could, and after reading the seven-volume oral transcript and the various appellate briefs, affidavits, and rulings, I seemed to agree. But just as I set down to write, I also looked through Detective Carignan's initial investigative report and the notes of La Guir's original court-appointed public defender.

Two things struck me. First, La Guir had given three different alibis for the night of the rape. When Detective Carignan interviewed him at the police station, La Guir said he had been home alone. Then he told the public defender that he had spent the entire evening with his sister Lisa. Only when his own attorney, Peter Eisenberg, appeared on the scene did La Guir produce the note of the Plymouth Café and the midnight drive in the red New to the sagittarius's house.

The next time La Guir called called, I asked him about these discrepancies. He said that the version was typed on a Tuesday night and that he was not questioned until Friday morning, at which point the detective asked him what he had done "last night," that is, Thursday night. He had told the truth, he said, that he'd stayed home alone. A similar misunderstanding, he went on, had occurred with the public defender, who'd asked him what he was doing Wednesday night, the night after the rape. He had said, truthfully, that he had spent it with his sister.

These explanations, while conceivable, were hardly compelling. Even more troubling was a second discrepancy I came across. La Guir's claim of innocence hinges on some theory of mistaken identity. The victim, transported, on drugs, and with a history of mental illness, is shown some photographs and asked by Detective Carignan not if she saw the attacker but, as he stated in his report, if she knew anyone "also known." She identifies La Guir. But Carignan's report also states that the day after the rape, two days before showing her the photographs, he had asked the victim if she knew her assailant. "She stated that she has seen this man several times," he wrote, "and has seen him going in and out of the apt next to her, the La Guir apt, and also in fact has seen him use his own keys to get in the apt."

In other words, the crucial identification was not based on a photograph but on recognition. The next time La Guir called, I asked him about the report. He explained, with a note of exasperation, that the women had at first refused to describe her attacker, except to say he was black and had a Hispanic accent, because he'd said he would kill her if she did. She relented, according to the detective's report, only when her daughter threatened to go stay in the apartment as "bait" to lure the assailant back.

The victim, La Guir said, may have simply chosen not to seem to prevent the daughter from endangering herself. Furthermore, he continued, the detective had already identified him as a Hispanic neighbor and, without including it in the report, may have suggested to the victim

that La Guir was the assailant. Evidence for this claim could be found in the fact that the detective destroyed his original notes of that interview. This conspiratorial explanation, while also possible, was even less impressive than the supposed appearance of misunderstandings that had led to the alibi confusion.

The confusion about La Guir's innocence that I felt had been a necessary precondition for wanting about him was shaken. Maybe he had not had a fair trial, but had he committed the crime? I could no longer be so certain that he hadn't. The straightforward, somewhat predictable narrative of the unfairly imprisoned innocent also seemed jeopardized, and it occurred to me for a moment simply to leave my reliance to the conflicting alibis or the victim's initial identification of La Guir out of the story but that, of course, wouldn't have been fair to anyone, including La Guir. It would have been to substitute a false and simplistic moral lesson for a more elusive but truer one.

I set down to compare the strengths of La Guir's story with its weaknesses. The weaknesses are, so to speak, weak themselves. After all, the stories of everyone else in the case also contain gaps and inconsistencies. The victim originally told Detective Carignan her attacker had been nude, which suggested he must have come from nearby, but on the witness stand she said that he'd been clothed. She also contradicted Carignan's report by saying on the stand that she would swear on a Bible that she had not identified La Guir until shown the photographs.

State officials, for their part, all along seemed less interested in uncovering the truth than in finding a possible culprit, sending him to prison, and then seeing that he stayed there. Carignan interviewed only three people—La Guir, the victim, and a man who lived in the basement—neglecting several other Hispanic tenants. When La Guir's blood type was finally determined, the prosecutor, who had previously argued that the sock was La Guir's, said the sweat with the conflicting blood type might have come from the victim.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, in the end, to see all the way into those few but crucial hours of La Guir's life. They remain blurry, and as a result, conclusive proof of his innocence lies just beyond reach. But while La Guir's story is not perfect, I again became convinced that he was innocent. Was it fair to expect him to have a flawless story? The perfect narrative is, more often than not, a literary construction. The sliver of most stories, if pulled hard enough, begins to unravel. How many of us, if called in by the police, would be able to establish anything where we were on a particular night if we happened to have been talking to a stranger at a bar or sitting alone in a lake? How many of all our stories are, to one degree or another, unprovable?

Last November, La Guir appealed Judge Mulhern's decision to deny him a new trial. When I visited him in Gardner, he was expecting a ruling any day.

"This is your last shot, right?" I asked him. "If this appeal is rejected, that's it."

"Oh, no. No, no, no." He drew strenuously on the Newport he was smoking and tapped the ashes on the floor. "There's federal appeals courts. There's the Supreme Court. There's lots of ways to go. You think I'm going to give up on this?" He shook his head. "I'm not giving up."

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THE ANGEL ESMERALDA

How do you live when the Terror is local?
A tale of the South Bronx in a time of plagues and miracles.

A SHORT STORY BY
DON DELILLO



HE OLD NUN ROSE AT DAWN, feeling pain in every joint. She'd been rising at dawn since her days as a postulante, kneeling on hardwood floors to pray. First she raised the shade.

That's the world out there, little green apples and infectious disease. Banded light fell across the room, sloping the tissued grain of the wood in an antique ocher glow so deeply pleasing in pattern and coloration that she had to look away or become girlishly engrossed. She knelt in the folds of the white nightgown, fabric endlessly laundered, beaten with swirled soap, left gristled and stiff. And the body beneath, the spindly thing she carried through the world, chalk pale mostly, and speckled hands with high veins, and cropped hair that was fine and flaxy gray, and her bluested eyes—many a boy and girl of old saw those peepers in their dreams.

She made the sign of the cross, murmuring the congruous words.

Amen, an olden word, back to Greek and Hebrew, verily—denoting her midsection to complete the body-shaped cross. The hriest of everyday prayers yet carrying three years' indulgence, seven if you dip your hand in holy water before you mark the body.

Prayer is a practical strategy, the gaining of temporal advantage in the capital markets of Sin and Remission.

She said a morning offering and got to her feet. At the sink she scrubbed her hands repeatedly with coarse brown soap. How raw the hands be clean if the soap is wet? This question was constant in her life. But if you clean the soap with bleach, what do you do the black beetle with? If you use acetone powder on the black beetle, how do you clean the box of Aqua? Grace has personalities. Different objects harbor dozens of various medicinal types. And the question runs around forever.

An hour later she was in her veil and habit, sitting in the passenger seat of a black van that was headed south out of the school district and down past the monster concrete expressway into the lost streets, a squander of burned-out buildings and unlanded souls. Grace, fifty-two at the wheel, a young man in scuffed shoes. All the nuns in the convent wore plain blouses and skirts except for Sister Edgar, who had permission from the motherhouse to tie herself out in the old things with the arcane names, the wrinkle, craton, and gumpie. She knew these were stories about her past, how she used to rival the big-busted rosey and crack addicts across the mouth with the iron crucifix. Things were simpler then. Clothing was layered, life was not. But Edgar stopped hating kids years ago, even before she grew too old to teach. She knew the nuns whispered deliriously about her amnesia, fading things and new together. Such an open show of power in a head-bodily surprising female. Edgar stopped hating children when the neighborhood changed and the faces of her students became darker.

All the righteous fury went out of her soul. How could she soothe a child who was not like her?

"The old lady needs a tune-up," Grace said. "Easier that sound."

"Ask him to take a look."

"Nuts-to-his."

"He's the expert."

"I can do it myself. I just need the right tools."

"I don't hear anything," Edgar said.

"Nuts-to-his! You don't hear that?"

"Maybe I'm going deaf."

"I'll go deaf before you do, Sister."

"Look, another angel on the wall."

The two women looked across a landscape of vacant lots filled with years of stratified debris—the age of housing garbage, the age of construction debris and vandalized car bodies. Many ages layered in waste. That area was called the Bird in popular police parlance, short for bird sanctuary, a term that referred in this case to a rack of land sitting idly from the social order. Weeds and trees grew amid the dumped objects. There were dog piles, sightings of hawks and owls. City workers came periodically to excavate the site, the hoods of their sweaters fitted snug waist; their hand bins, and they stood warily by the great earth machines, the pump-and-matted backhoes and dozers, like anti-aircraftmen, huddled near advancing tanks. But soon they left, they always left with hawks half dug, pieces of equipment discarded, skydivers' caps, pepperoni pizzas. The

nuns looked across all this. There were networks of veins, cranes chocked with plumbing fixtures and Rheotank. There were hullocks of slatted fire-laced with shoving vice. Graffiti sang at sunset off the low walls of demolished buildings. The guys sat in the van and looked. At the far end was a lone standing structure, a darker monument with an exposed wall where another building had once abated. This wall was where Israel Milton and his crew of graffiti writers sprayed-painted a memorial angel every time a child died in the neighborhood. Angels in blue and pink covered roughly half the high slab. The child's name and age were prattled in cursive letters under each angel, sometimes were cause of death or personal comments by the family and on the van doors Sister Edgar could see letters for TB, AIDS, beatings, drowsy shootings, blood disorders, measles, general neglect, and abandonment at birth—left in Dumpster, forgot in car, left in Glad bag. Xmas Eve.

"I wish they'd stop already with the angels," Grace said. "It's really bad taste. A fourteenth-century church, that's where you go for angels. This wall publicizes all the things we're working to change. Israel should look for positive things to emphasize. The townhouses, the community gardens that people plant. The townhouses are nice, they're clean. Walls around the corner you see ordinary people going to work, going to school. Stores and churches."

"Diane Power Baptist Church."

"It's a church, it's a church, what's the difference? The area's full of churches. Deacon working people. Israel wants to do a wall, those are the people he should celebrate. Be positive."

Edgar laughed inside her skull. It was the drama of the angels that made her feel she belonged here. It was the terrible stain these angels represented. It was the danger the written field to produce their graffiti. There were few windows or windows on the memorial wall, and the women had to rumple from the roof with bellows, rags or sweep on sidewalk's scaffold when they did an angel in the lower ranks. Israel spoke of a companion wall for dead graffiti, flashing his wanted smile.

"And he does pick for girls and blue for boys. That really says my teeth on lips."

"There are other colors," Edgar said.

"Sure, the struts that the angels hold shift. Big ribbons in the sky. Make me want to be sick in the street."

They stopped at the ferry to pick up food they would distribute to the nuns. The ferry was an old brick building wedged between boarded warehouses. Three marks in gray clouds and rope bells washed in an afternoon, getting the day's shipment ready. Grace, Edgar, and Brother Mike carried the plastic bags out to the van. Mike was an ex-felon with a flimsy beard and wispy ponytail. He looked like two different guys front and back. When the men first appeared he'd offered to serve as guide, a protecting presence, but Edgar had firmly declined. She believed her hair and veil were safety enough. Beyond these South Bronx streets people may look at her and think she came outside history and chronology. But inside the stress of rubble she was a natural right, she and the robot messes. What figures could be as tautly consumed for sins and plague?

Edgar lived among the masses in the street. They wanted the homeless, on a shelter for the homeless, they collected food for the hungry. And they were run in a place where few men remained. Teenage boys in chains, around drug dealers—these were the men of the immediate streets. She didn't know where the others had gone, the fathers, leaving with second or third families, hidden in rooming houses or sleeping under highways in refrigerator boxes, buried in the police's field on their's island.

"I'm sweating plant space," Brother Mike said. "I've got a kick I take out to the lot."

Grace said, "You say on the fringes, right?"

"They know me in the lot."

"Who knows you? The dogs know you? There are no dogs, Mike."

"I'm a Franciscan, okay? But I have on my under finger."

"Stay on the fringes," Grace told him.

"There's a gal I keep using, maybe twelve years old, runs away when I try to talk to her. I get the feeling she's loving in the meat. Ask around."

"Will do," Grace said.

When the van was loaded they drove back to the Bird to do their business with Israel and to pick up a few of his crew who would help them distribute the food. What was their business with Israel? They gave him lists that detailed the locations of abandoned cars in the north Bronx, particularly along the Bronx River, which was a major dump site for stolen joyriders, unattended gunpowder-punctured vehicles. Israel sent his crew to collect the car bodies and whatever parts might remain unshattered. They used a small flesh truck with an indispensable witch and a mass of scale-in-bell graffiti on the side, deck, and mudflaps. The car bodies came here to the lot for inspection and pre-scrubbing by Israel and were then delivered to a scrap-metal operation in remotes Brooklyn. Sometimes there were fire or oily containers or bodies damaged in the lot, machine-quality-bashed and mangled, hoodless, doorless, windows deep-angled like rusty rights in the exposures.

When the van approached the building, Edgar felt along her midsection for the laser gloves she kept tucked in her belt.

Israel had scars of car-porpoises who merged across the boulevards, concentrating on the black streets under bridges and viaducts. Charred cars, upside-down cars, cars with dead bodies wrapped in shower curtains all available for sale inside the city limits. The money he paid the nuns for their "scrap-metal" work went to the ferry for groceries.

Grace noticed the van, the daily constant, visible in human sight. She reached the vinyl-covered steel outlet to the steering wheel, firing the red into the lock housing. At the same time Edgar lace-fisted the laser gloves on to her hands, feeling the secret measurement of synthetic threads, adhesive rubberized padding, a shield against organic remains, the report of blood as pus and the vital contact within teeth, supermicroscopic parasites in their protein coats.

Sometimes occupied a number of faces Edgar didn't need to see them to know who they were. They were a civilization of indigents subsisting without heat, light, or water. They were nuclear families with toys and pens, junkies who soaked at night in dead men's bedsheets. She knew who

they were through assimilation through the ingestion of messages that rattled the streets. They were fingers and gizzards, convulsions: the people who yowled through subway cars with paper cups. And doctors sunning on the roof to cleanse weather and man with warrens outstanding for redneck endangerment and deprived indifference and other offenses requiring the rounded Victorian locusts that modern courts have adopted to watch the woodroofs. And shooters of the spirit, she knew this for a fact—a band of charismatics who leaped and seep on the top floor, uttering words and newscasts, treating knife wounds with grapes.

Isabel had her headqu岸ons on three and she came hustled up the stairs. Grace had a tendency to look back unnecessarily at the senior man, who asked in her incoherent gurgles but kept pace well enough, her habit whispering through the stairwell.

"Needles on the landing," Grace warned. "Watch the needles, nobody else. needles, such delicate instruments of self-dropped. Grace couldn't understand why an add to would not be sure to use clean needles. This felt as much her pop her chest as Grace. But Edgar thought about the law of damnation, the little love bite all that dangerously huge. If you know you're worth nothing, only a gambler with death can grant you victory.

Isabel stood hunched on dusty floorboards as a pair of old chains rattled to his calves and a bright skirt worn outside his pants and he resembled some carefree Cuban ankle-walking in happy surf.

Sisters, what do you have for me?" Edgar thought he was quite young despite the seasoned six maybe early dawn—seasoned beard, a sweet smile complicated by staining teeth. Members of his crew moved around smoking, uncertain of the image they wanted to convey. He sent two of them down to watch the van and the food. Edgar knew that Grace did not trust these kids. Gruffo writers, or songwriters, probably pretty thieves, maybe worse. All street, no home or school. Edgar's basic can please was their English. They spoke an unmarked English, soft and muffled, insufficiently raffish, and she wanted to draw some hard gut into the side of their grounds.

Grace handed over a bar of zinc they'd spinned in the last few days. Details of size and place, type of vehicle, condition of use.

He said, "Do you mind work? My other people do like this, we run the world by now."

What was Edgar supposed to do, correct their grammar and pronunciation, look suffering from malnutrition, ungarantied some of them, some visibly pregnant—there were at least four girls in the crew. In fact she was inclined to do just that. She wanted to get them in a room with a blackboard and to brace their initials with Spelling and Punctuation, intensive verbs, i before e except after a. She wanted to drill them in the lessons of the old fisherman Canebrake. "True or false, you or he fill in the blanks. She'd asked to be called about this and he'd made an effort to look interested,

nodding heavily and muttering incoherent assurances that he would think about the matter.

"I can pay you next time," Ismael said. "I got some things I'm doing that I need the capital."

"What things?" Grace said.

"The making plans I got some heat and electric in here, plus points cable for the Kaitoko."

Edgar stood at the far end of the room, by a window facing front and side saw someone moving among the papers and abandoned toys in the most conspicuous of the grubby lot. A girl in a tawny, jenny and strept, pants rubbing in the underbrush, caught for something to eat or wear. Edgar watched her, a lucky kid who had a lot of formal intelligence, a mixture of gaudy and step—the look of helplessness but alert, she looked unwashed but completely clean somehow, earth-look and hungry and quick. There was something about her that interested the man, a charmed quality, a grace that gratified and sustained.

Edgar and something and just then the girl slipped through a mass of wrecked cars and by the time Grace reached the window she was barely a tick of the eye, lost in the low ruins of an old fishhouse.

"Who is this girl?" Grace said, "What's out there in the loss, hiding from people?"

Ismael looked at his crew and one of them poked up, an undernourished boy in

spray-painted jeans, dark-skinned and shuffling.

"Grace said, 'Nobody know where her mother's at.'"

Grace said, "Can you find the girl and then tell Ismael? Make it."

"That girl she being smart."

A little squander of accent.

"She's a running fool that girl."

Tenzo, brief.

"Why did her mother go away?"

"She's a soldier. They on, you know, predictable."

If you let me teach you not to read a sentence with a preposition, Edgar thought, I will save your life. Ismael said, "Maybe the mother starved. She feels the worst of remorse. You have to thank someone."

"Do," Grace said. "All the time."

"The truth of the matter there's kids that are better off without their mothers or fathers. Because their mothers or fathers are dangerous their safety."

Grace said, "If anyone sees Esterilida, take her to Brother Mike or hold her, I mean really hold her until I can get here and talk to her. She's no young to be on her own or even living with the crew. Brother and she's twelve."

"Twelve is not so young," Ismael said. "One of my best writers, he does weekdays, he's nearly twelve more or less. I mean I send him down in a rope for the complicated letters."

"When do we get our money?" Grace said.

"Next time for sure. I make practically, you know, nothing on this script. My margin is a very minimum. I'm looking to expand outside Brooklyn. Sell my cars to one of these up-and-coming countries that's making the boats."

"Making the what? I don't think they're looking for parked cars," Grace said. "I think they're looking for weapons-grade uranium."

The Japanese built their navy with the South Avenue. You know this story? One day it's script, next day it's a plane taking off a deck. They don't be surprise my script ends up in North, you know, Korea."

Edgar caught the mark on Grace's face. Edgar did not speak. This was not a subject she could ever take. Edgar was a cold war man who once lived the sedate of her room with diamond film as a shield against nuclear fallout from communist bombs. Not that she didn't think a war might be shelling. She dramatized every dotted fish in the film of her skin used to compare the burst even now with the USSR. Gruffo alphabetically the native letters toppled like Cynical satirists.

They went down to the van, the man and three kids and with the two kids already on the street they set out to distribute the food, starting with the hardest cases in the program.

They rode the elevator and walked down the long passageway. Behind each door a set of unmanageable bins, with boxes and newspapers, put fish remaining in dirty bowls. Edgar led the way, the two kids in single file behind her, each with two bags of food, and Grace in the rear, carrying food, calling out apartment numbers of people on the list.

They spoke to an elderly woman who lived alone, a drabster with an amputated leg.

They saw a man with epilepsy.

They spoke to two blind women who lived together and shared a stinging-eye dog.

They saw a woman in a wheelchair who wore a fierce new rose T-shirt. Grace said she would probably grade the food they gave her for herse, the finest street wags available. The crew looked on, frowning. Grace sat her up, she answered her role eyes and handled over the food very. They agreed about this, not just the maps but the crew as well. It was Sister Grace against everybody, even the wheelchair woman. Didn't think she should get the food.

They saw a man with cancer who tried to kiss the last blind of Sister Edgar.

They saw five small children hunched on a bed being nuzzled by a ten-year old.

They went down the passageway. The kids returned to the van for more food and they went single file down the passageway in the blacked light.

They talked to a pregnant woman watching a soap opera in Spanish. Edgar said he'd a child day after being betrayed, the gods are angry in heaven. The woman was impressed. If a child is in danger still there is no peace, Edgar said, the woman herself can administer baptism. How? Poor ordinary water on the forehead of the child, saying, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The woman repeated the words in Spanish and English and everyone felt better.

They went down the passageway past a hundred closed doors and Edgar thought of all the infants in herds, unattended babies in the sewerwater, hell-brothers in the neighborhoods of slumbers, a cosmic cloud of slumbering fetters floating in the rays of Saturn, or babies born without any more systems, bubble children raised by computers, or babies

born addled—the new ones all day long, half-brothers newborn with crack babies, they resembled something out of peasant folklore.

They heard garbage crashing down the incinerator chutes and they walked one behind the other, three boys and two girls forming one body with the stairs, a single zigzagged figure with many moving parts. They rode the elevators down and finished their deliveries in a group of teenagers whose heads replaced broken glass in the lobby doors.

Grace dropped the crew at the first gate as a bus pulled up. What's that, do you believe it? A tour bus in cement colors with a sign in the slot above the windshield reading SOUTH BEACHES BUREAU. Grace's breathing grew incoherent. About thirty Europeans with slung cameras stopped shyly onto the sidewalk in front of the boarded shops and closed factories and they gazed across the street in the derelict treatment in the middle distance.

Grace went half backward, knocking her head on the van and calling, "It's not natural. It's not, it's not. You're making it natural by coming here. You had a natural. You're natural."

A stock roller by the rotary built. The tourists turned to Grace short at their. They saw a man crouching along with battery-run powerheads he was selling brightly colored vests pinned to a stick, and he held a dozen or so in his hands with others jangling from his pockets and clutched under his arms, plastic vests spinning all around him—an elderly black lecher in a yellow skullcap. They saw this man. They saw the elderly jungle and the smooth layer of mottled cars and they looked at the memory slide of painted angels with acronyms rippled above their church heads.

Grace shouting "This is real, it's real." Shouting, "Brazils is natural. Milan is natural. This is the only real. The Bronx is real."

A tourist bought a powerhead and got back in the bus. Grace pulled away muttering. In Europe the night was bonnets like controversial beach houses. That's natural, she said. A traffic jam developed not far from the Blvd. The two women sat with drifting thoughts. Edgar watched children with house from school, brushing air that rises from the coast and comes windborne to this street at the edge of the coastline. Was beside the child with dirty fingernails. She used to drink the kindness of her life gruel with a ruler if her hands were not bright as natural dunes.

A cleric rang all around them, weary heaving horns and police sirens and the great station roar of low-lying Khloren.

Grace, concerned I wonder why you put up with all this," Grace said. "You've earned some peace and quiet. You could live Upside and do development work for the order. How I would love to sit in the rose garden with a nuptial novel and old Pepper curled at my feet." Old Pepper was the cat in the neighborhood. Upstairs. "You could take a picnic lunch to the pond."

Edgar had a marriage inner grin that flouted someone back near her palace. She did not yearn for life Upstate. That was the truth of the world, right here, her soul's own home. herself—the new barrel, the frisky drive who must face the real terror of the streets to earn the larger of destruction made her. Where there would she do her



work but under the brave and crazy will of Israel! Muteo?

Then Grace was out of the van. She was out of the son belt, out of the van, and running down the street. The door hung open. Edgar understood at once. She turned and saw the girl, Emersilda, half a block ahead of Grace, running for the Red. Grace moved among the cars in her dainty shoes and fringed skirt. She followed the girl around a corner where the two buses sat dead in traffic. The runner watched the running figure. Edgar could see the light beads perspire on her face, her hands opening at the wristlives.

All sounds gathered in the dimming sky. She thought she understood the runner. You travel somewhere, not for muscans and runners but for nuns, bombed out terrain. For the moss grown memory of terror and war. Emergency vehicles were awaiting about a block and a half away. She saw western pay open subway grates in billows of pale smoke and she said a last prayer, an act of hope, three pines, indulgence. Then heads and cones began to emerge, industriously people coming out the air with jaws pressed open in furrow gaps. A short crowd, a subway fix. Through the narrow mass.

She spotted runners ignoring off the street and edging along the street, poised to take pictures. And the sidewalks going by, barely interested—they saw types of actual killings on TV. But what did she know, an old woman who ate fish on Latin street? She was far less worthy than Sister Grace. Grace was a soldier, a fighter for human worth. Edgar was basically a power. A priest protecting a set of laws and prohibitions. She heard the summer of people pushing in stalled traffic, and saw a hardened soldierly crime come out of the tunnels across paved by workers in incandescent vests and she watched the runners snatching pictures and thoughts of the trip ahead made to future many years ago for study and spiritual renewal, and that's what she heard the great domes and powdered the catenae and church basements and this is what she thought as the riders came up to the street, how she'd stored in a suburban chapel of a Capuchin church and could not take her eyes off the skeletons stacked there, wondering about the moribund whose lack had once decorated these materials and human and skulls, many that heaped in closets and carry corners, and the shimmering, glowing, undulating dust, those are the dead who will come out of the earth to look and judge the living, to punish the sons of the living—damn, yes, triumphant—but does the really want to believe that, isn't it?

Grace edged into the driver's seat, unhappy and flustered. "Nasty caught her. We ran into the thick part of the lane and then I was depressed, damn scared really, because how I couldn't believe it, actual hate—like the only thing humans on earth? She said some young mothers with her fingers. They came swarming up out of a crater filled with molten waste. Bendages smeared with white fluids."

"I don't want to hear it," Edgar said. "I want, like, enough said, enough to satisfy the death wish of those cars. Dead white mice by the hundreds with stiff fat bodies. You could flip them like baseball bats."

Edgar reached her fingers inside the sticky gloves. "And Emersilda somewhere in those shrubs and parked cars. I'll bet anything she's living in a car." Grace said. "What happened here? Subway fix, look like."

"Yes."
"Any dead?"
"I don't think so."
"I wish I'd caught her."
"She'll be all right," Edgar said.
"She won't be all right."
"She can take care of herself. She knows the landscape. She's smart."
"Sooner or later," Grace said.
"She's safe. She's smart. She'll be all right."

And that night, under the first star of scorching sleep, Edgar saw the subway riders enter cars, glide, arrive, females of childbearing age, all rescued from the sticky tunnels, groping along sidewalks and left up companion ladders to the street—fishes and mothers, the lost parents found and gathered, worn plucked and bodied up, galled to the surface, by small, flicking figures with Day Glo wings.

AND SOME WEEKS LATER Edgar and Grace made their way on foot across a patch of lost not to the banks of the Bronx River near the city lanes. Where a non-actual Honda car dangled in an underbrush, glass gone, was gone, windows laid clearly, its stomach in the great compartments, and after they noted the particulars of disorientation and got back in the van. Edgar had an awful feeling one of those forebodings from years long past when she sensed dark things about a pupil or a parrot or another man, felt a warning of information in the dainty corridors of the convent or the school's supply room that smelled of pencil wood and composition books or the church that abated the school, some dark knowledge in the window that forested from the door's swinging center, because things used to come to her in the creek of old floor boards and the odor of clothes, other people's damp car coats, because the dress Nene and Ramona and Catalina plus into the spoken corner poem of her habit and veil.

Now that she'd turned the power to live without doubt. She closed the door. That night she heard over the washbasin in her room and cleared every head of the scrub hairs with steel wool drenched in disinfectant. But this meant she had to remove the bottle of disinfectant on something stronger than disinfectant. And the bottle's done that. She hadn't done it because the regression was infinite. And the regression was infinite because it is called infinite regression. You see how doubt becomes a disease that spreads beyond the purely extraneous of matter and in to the elevated spaces where words play upon themselves.

And another morning a day later. She sat in the van and watched Sister Grace emerge from the convent, the milling got, the short legs and squarish body. Grace's face opened as she edged around the front of the vehicle and opened the door on the driver's side.

She got in and gripped the wheel, looking straight ahead. "I got a call from the frumy."
Then she reached for the door and shut it. She gripped the wheel again.
"Somebody taped Emersilda and threw her off a roof?"
She stirred the engine.
"I'm strong here thinking. Who do I tell?"
She looked at Edgar briefly, then put the van in gear.
"Because who do I tell in the only, question I can ask myself without falling apart completely?"

They drove south through local streets, the tattered brick cracked mellow in the morning light. Edgar felt the weather of Grace's eyes and pain—she'd approached the girl two or three times in recent weeks, had talked to her from a distance, thrown a bag of clothing into the jokehouse where Emersilda moved. They rode all the way in silence with the older man said nothing questions and answers from the Bel rans. Caution. The strength of these emotions, which was a form of pardonable prayer, lay in the voice that accompanied her, children propelling through the decades, rhytmic, strong, a purple cloud that was the kind of music for life. Questions and answers. What deeper dialogue might right minds drive? She reached her hand across to Grace's on the wheel and kept it there for a digital tick on the dash-board clock. Who said that? God made us. These clay-ridden faces as behaving. Who is God? God is the Supreme Being who made all things. She felt and in her arms, her arms were heavy and dead and she got all the way to Lesson 12 when the projects appeared at the rim of the sky, upper windows with web surplines against the broad dark face of heaven above.

When Grace finally spoke she said, "It's all there."
"What's all there?"
"Hear it hear it?"
"Hear what?" Edgar said.
"Ku ku ku ku."

Then she drove the van down past the projects toward the parked wall.

When they got there the angel was already spread in place. They gave her a pink sweater and pink and aqua pants and a pair of white Air Jordans with the logo pronounced—she was a running fool, no longer got her running shoes. And the little kid named Juana still dangled from a rope, watched down from the roof by the old hand-powered hoist they used to hoist people onto the deck of the truck. Inside and others bent over the ledge, attempting to shoot, correct, chuck down to him as he drifted in and from the wall, leaving it to spray the inter-laced lattice that masked the giant gear of old wildcat griffin. The mass stood outside the van, watching the kid finish the last sanded wood and then saw him parked skyward in the colored wind.

EMERALDA LOPEZ

11 YEAR

DETACHED IN HEAVEN

They all sat on the third floor and Grace paced the hollow room. Israel stood in a corner smoking a Phillies Blunt. The man did not seem to know what to begin, how to address the hopeless thing that someone had done to this child. She'd so wanted to save. She poured, she climbed her feet. They heard the gurgling moan of a city bus some blocks away.

"Second. You have to find out who that guy is that did this thing."

"You think I'm running here? I'd say this too!"
"You have contacts in the neighborhood that can give me the name?"

"What neighborhood? The neighborhood's over there. This isn't the first. It's all I can do to get these kids out of their spell a word on the inside wall. When I was writing we did subway cars in the dark without a later message."

"Why does she spell?" Grace said.

Grace exchanged a secret look with Sister Edgar, giving her a single smile from out of his history of dead angles. She felt weak and lost. Now that Terror has become local how do we live? She thought. The great shadowy dead world—no longer a launched object in the sky named for a Greek goddess on a bill board in 1900 a.c. "What a Terror now? Some noise on the pavement every night, a thud with a punting knife or the stammer of casual runners from a passing car. Someone who comes off your child. Ancient lists called back, they will meet up with. They will come into my house when I'm asleep and out on my front because they have a dialogue with Sister. She let Grace carry her grief and fatigue for the rest of that day and the day after and the day or three weeks after that. Edgar thought she might find out, begin to see the world as a sign of black matter that changed to make an eternal planet here and a dead state there, with random waste between. The severity of its means design was running from her sleep lines and proper note, the power that men and thrill. When Grace and the crew took food into the projects, Edgar wanted in the van. She was the man in the van, unable to face the people who needed reasons for Emersilda.

Then the father of Mercy got in. Three hundred days. Then the father began, word passing black to black, moving through churches and synagogues, maybe garbled slightly, misunderstood here and there, but not deeply distorted—it was clear enough that people were talking about the same anxiety, occurrence. And some of them were and looked and said others, starting the hope that grows on our passing things.

They gathered after dusk at a windy place between bridge approaches, seven or eight people down by the road or one or two, then thirty people down by the seven, then a tight silent crowd that grew bigger but no less respectful. Two hundred people gathered onto a traffic circle in the basement of the projects, the emergency arches down from the terminal moles and the main yards stretch around the narrow, all that industrial decision that breaks your heart with its frenetic Depression heavy—the things that should still waste and the old red brick bridge spanning the Harlem River an openwork tower at either end, maybe swaying slightly in persistent wind.

Wedged, they came and parked their cars if they had cars, six or seven to a car, parking asked on a high shoulder or in the factory site streets, and they wedged themselves onto the concrete island between the expressway and the pocket boulevard, feeling the wind come chilling in and going about the wash of midday traffic to a billboard leaning in the gloom—some advertisement sign scaffolded high above the overhead and wires to attract the depend-over



**Sister Edgar saw herself
as a fraidy child who must face
the streets to cure the finger
of destruction inside her.**

"I need a couple of raincoats cleaned overnight."



By the way, and our valets will clean and deliver your clothing by morning. If it's wrinkled, they'll press it with equal dispatch. We will polish your shoes with a virtuoso's touch, and if need be, even provide new lace—all with our compliments. And our room service chefs will ensure your breakfast arrives well before your 8:30 a.m. taxi. In this value-conscious era, the demands of business demand nothing less. For reservations, telephone your travel counselor or call 1-800-332-3442.

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THE ESQUIRE GUIDE

THE BALD TRUTH ABOUT HAIR

Be advised: It'll leave you in the end.

By MICHAEL SEGELL

IF YOU'RE UNDER FORTY, you may at this moment be experiencing the unpleasant effects of cortisol, the stress hormone, which your adrenals just dumped into your bloodstream when you grasped the subject of this month's Guide. You would not be alone—almost half of all men begin losing significant amounts of hair in their teens, twenties, or thirties. Among all the male neuroses, hair-loss anxiety has one of the lowest flash points—hence the cortisol churning in your pipes and the 11 billion spent each year by men coming to terms with this unwelcome secondary sex characteristic. Eventually the playing field will level. If you make it to eighty, you'll be joined by the vast majority of your peer group that try not to fret. Stress is probably one of the several factors that contribute to balding, and our goal here is to help you perceive what you've got, manage what you haven't, or learn to live happily with your follicular deficit.

PART I: THE FATE OF THE PATE

EVERY ONE OF YOUR HAIRS has a genetic blueprint detailing what will happen to it. The gene that determines whether you'll be susceptible to androgenetic alopecia (baldness) is located in the autosomes, the nonsex chromosomes that occupy every cell of your body, and, contrary to popular myth, can be inherited from ancestors from either of your parents' families. Though some of us have highly creative creative patterns, most of us shed hairs

according to one of three basic patterns. Vertex baldness is the most common configuration. The hairs on the crown, or vertex, disappear first, exposing a small, shiny circle's cap of scalp that expands concentrically over time. Others last experience frontal recession. The hairline, as a physiological irritation of cortisol shrinks, slowly retreats from the forehead. The third pattern is an accelerated version of the first two. The devastating occurs simultaneously, eventually isolating an island of hair on top before the last outpost, too, succumbs to epidermal hegemony. Fortunately, most of the hair at the back and sides of your head is programmed to accompany you to your grave. Until a master gene is discovered that governs this process, nothing can be done to alter each hair's genetic coding. At the same time, if your hair is fated to survive for a specific number of years before the follicle goes up the ghost, it's not all that easy to kill it prematurely.

THE INCREDIBLE SHINKING FOLLICLE

What happens when the exciting DNA trip a follicle's molecular switch? Receptors on the hair follicle become activated and suddenly

Three Ways You Lose It

Baldness involves no loss of hair—just a change in the way it grows.



1. Vertex baldness



2. Frontal recession



3. Baldy comb



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Executive GENTLEMAN

Fall collections report, great spring sport coats, twisted classics

On Fashion: Woody Hochswender

New York Story

IT IS ONE OF the minor mysteries of life that we ask you to think about fall fashion just as the weather begins to get warm. Men's-wear designers have an even longer lead time than women's designers, showing their clothes on the runway about seven months before the styles reach the stores. In any case, the news from

the runways of New York is mostly good, since the American collections bring a refreshing element of normalcy to fashion after the extremes shown in Europe.

Most of the clothing here is the kind you would not be afraid to go out the door in, although some of the models who wear it are a little frightening. The onslaught of ugly models in the women's fashion shows has now been paralleled by an onslaught of unattractive men. Mike A. Smith—underfoot, wild-haired, and

Tenney's taste: A discolored suit from Tenney Hilger's new fall collection



Fall winners: Calvin Klein's velvet suit, above, and reverse-shoulder coat, right; Ralph Lauren's five-button tuxedo, below



PIERRE SCHERMAN

MAY 1994 ESQUIRE 119



Peak experience: (top) Lauren's gray suit (left) is single-breasted with peaked lapels.

a suit jacket and a coat, that goes great with olive whiplash cotton trousers, the kind with utility pockets on the pant legs. This is for when you want to feel like William the grandseigneur. For when you want to seem the grounds in an error-free mood, Lauren makes a rufy given three-piece herringbone tuxedo, very shaped, with a five-button front, kind of *Flamenco* Fall-hair for the Nineties.

Tommy Hilgert, a designer not especially known for business suits, debuted a new line of tailored clothing, and it was the real thing. Mats (tailored by Hermès, Hilgert's

Jeep, whose name is familiar here from his big-time fragrance, Joop? (pronounced *yoo*, with a bit of ecclesiastical emphasis at the end). Joop, who has been called the Calvin Klein of Germany (perhaps because of his boyish, blond good looks), introduced his men's fashions to America with an amazing show full of ideas, some of them rufy (pencil leather trousers, latex ski caps, latex pants) and

some quite marvelous, like his thin, quarter-length double-breasted coats in royal blue and navy. He also makes interesting suits, in a modernist brown check and in richly colored corduroy.

Knitwear, or sweaters, as we civilians call them, played an important part in the collections. The prototypical style was a grossly oversized, extra-thick turtleneck, like the ones shown by John Barthel, who specializes in wildly antagonistic all-black clothing. Overcast sweaters were also featured by Joseph Abboud, who trotted out white cable-knit sweaters—a cardigan on top of a crewneck, for example—

to borrow a phrase and a look from the women's wear lexicon. His outerwear, particularly the shaggy and shaggy coats, was, as usual, exceptional. Abboud also favors the Nehru jacket, and at times it seemed as if the models were there to bear your confusion.

Now obviously, what makes a Mesh so comfy is that it is a Mesh. It's "ventilated" with thousands of tiny air holes that let it breathe. (Don't ask us how many thousands, please—we've got us counting.)

But to make our Mesh Knit even cooler, we added thoughtful hole details. For example, side vents. So, you can wear the shirt outside your pants, without its catching around the hips.

We also tape the neck band to keep the edges from chafing and



Accessories: (bottom) sweater, left, by John Barthel; shirt, below, by John Barthel; shirt, below, by John Barthel. The shirt, below, by John Barthel. The shirt, below, by John Barthel.



to borrow a phrase and a look from the women's wear lexicon. His outerwear, particularly the shaggy and shaggy coats, was, as usual, exceptional. Abboud also favors the Nehru jacket, and at times it seemed as if the models were there to bear your confusion.



Outerwear: Joseph Abboud's sweaters, left, and shaggy coats, right.

You'll find our Mesh Knit has more of nearly everything—except flies, slubs and cracking.

If you make a cotton Mesh Knit shirt—and you're as finicky as Lands' End—there are a million things to watch for.

Cotton comes from the field, after all. You can card it, and comb it, and still have stuff left in it. When that's knit into the cloth, the result is flies and slubs—tiny bumps and imperfections, like hicups in the fabric. They're unsightly and weaken the Mesh.

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A fine Mesh we're getting you into.

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Now obviously, what makes a Mesh so comfy is that it is a Mesh. It's "ventilated" with thousands of tiny air holes that let it breathe. (Don't ask us how many thousands, please—we've got us counting.)

But to make our Mesh Knit even cooler, we added thoughtful hole details. For example, side vents. So, you can wear the shirt outside your pants, without its catching around the hips.

We also tape the neck band to keep the edges from chafing and

rubbing you the wrong way.

And speaking of rubbing, we hate when a shirt's color rubs off—on other clothing, for instance. That's called cracking. We try and avoid it by using reactive dyes. These get chemically "married" to the yarn—the two become nearly inseparable till death do them part.

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Good Sports



A jacket doesn't always have to mean business, especially in summer. Instead, dress up your favorite khakis, T-shirts, and jeans with a lively sport coat—a check, a stripe, a madras. And never again fear the words “jacket required.”

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WES BELL



Lines-and-stripe sport jacket and dress shirt by New Republic; linen vest by Hugo Boss; linen trousers by Shaker 0063 by Tasso. Lines-and-stripe sport jacket and linen shirt by Valentino; gold-tone trousers by New Republic; suede jacket by Gabe-Lane; watch by Kenneth Cole. Tasso. Photographed at the Colton Bar at Le Pavillon, Miami Beach. Opposite page: shirt by rights; silk sport jacket, dress vest, and silk polo shirt by Armani; jeans, cotton-and-nylon trousers by K&N by Armani. West sport jacket by Joffe's; white polo shirt by Rylee; linen trousers by Barry Kitchner; suede moccasins by Tasso. Bar chicken by E&N. Photographed at Alibi at the Biltmore Hotel, Miami Beach.



Three-button knee-and-silk sport jacket by Gianni Versace; white-and-tan shirt by Rydell. Photographed at the Coffee Bar at Le Brasseur. Opposite page: Three sport jacket and vest by Studio 5401 by Pierre; cotton crewneck shirt by Mada & Marco. Hair done by s.h.o. Photographed at Alibi at the Garden Hotel.

Good Sports



Three-button linen sport jacket by Isacberg; linen shirt by Tostanorita; cotton trousers by Rykin; watch by Baccarat. Her clothes by Anna Elio by Rickard Tyler. Photographed at the Marlin Hotel, Miami Beach. Opposite page: Three-button wool sport jacket by Tappanville; cotton polo shirt and linen-and-wool trousers by Rykin; cotton T-shirt by Hugo Boss; necklace by Yana. Her dress by Nicole Miller. Photographed at the Cavalier Hotel, Miami Beach.

For more information see page 143.

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY LUCYCE; STYLING BY RENEE; HAIR: MOTT; STYLING: SCOTT KING AND TERRY OF KISS; MODEL: CHANON OF KISS





Classics on the Edge

When it comes to suits, even fashion rebels should be well versed in the classics. Here for spring, a virtual library of timeless style.
Photographs by Patrik Andersson



THE DECONSTRUCTED: In evening, double-breasted, by Polo by Ralph Lauren, color: shirt with French cuffs by Charvet, silk tie by Boks.

THE GLEN PLaid: Three-piece single-breasted woad-stained wool suit, opposite, by Polo by Ralph Lauren, color: shirt by Charvet, silk tie by Dunhill, monk-strap shoes by Church's.



LINEN ANDORILL. A simple two-button suit by Paul Stuart, cotton oxford shirt and woven tie by Charvet.

NAVY. A double-breasted two-piece suit by Paul Stuart, cotton oxford shirt by Charvet, silk tie by Brooks Brothers.

Classics
Shades of Gray



GRAY NAILHEAD A sleek double-breasted wool version by Doublet, cotton shirt by Charvet, silk tie by Prada.

CHARCOAL GRAY A three-button, three-piece windward, opposite sleeve wind-out vest by Buckett, cotton oxford shirt by Charvet, silk tie by Prada.



For stage information see
page 142.

[illegible]



MUSIC

Mark Jacobson

Mash Up de Town, Mon

DOWN IN JAMAICA, which is what some people call Jamaica—where the customary response to the phrase “see you later” is “if you see”—they talk about “de pressure.” De pressure builds and builds. Sooner or later, everyone knows, it’s gonna “drop.” De pressure got to Don Drummond. One day Drummond, leader and transverse player of the Skatalites, the seminal ska band of the 1950s and 1960s, shot and killed his girlfriend, a dancer named Marguerite. The authorities put Drummond in a mental institution, which is where he died. Given that, it is no surprise that Drummond, inventor of any number of the music’s enduring signature riffs, is widely considered the father of Jamaican pop. De pressure dictates de perfect pedigree, mon.

Then again, without de pressure, Jamaica, a seething, teeming island with fewer than three million people, might not have produced the most remarkable canon of pop music to emerge outside the United States since 1950. A heady ration of this gangster creative soul can be heard on the new four-disc box set, *The Story of Jamaican Music—Tougher Than Tough (Miami)*. Early the best history of the Jamaican ghetto sound—born late “world music” before the term was invented—*Tougher Than Tough* spans the genre from the early 1950s “blue beat” and ska bands through the roots/reggae/Rasta period to the current mammoth dance-hall rappers.

It couldn’t have been easy picking and choosing. First of all, you’d have to look under every rock to find a Jamaican who doesn’t think he’s a star; a lot of his was has been cut down there. For years every other “male boy” had a shoe box full of his new modern-runking, thinking monstrosities bound to “mash up” the island, if only some pirate producer would give up the studio time to do it right. But in the *Jerry the Clerk* character discovers in the archetypal reggae movie, *My Lifez Myzine*, the simple accumulation of fame and money is not enough. De pressure (read: postcolonial ghetto life) demands more. A spiritual solace, perhaps. For instance, exactly how did a large segment of Caribbean blacks, descendants of slaves, finding themselves to be a lost tribe of Israelis trapped in a virtual Babel, reach the conclusion that Blake Skaime, the dimwitted Larc of Judah, Emperor of lie-off Ethiopia, was Job, the loving God on earth, and then proceed to make international hit records celebrating this arcane notion? This assumes one of the great head-scratching conundrums and capitalist triumphs of modern times.

Relentlessly political, alternately redemptive and acoustical, Rasta music of the sort made famous by Bob Marley is well represented on *Tougher Than Tough*. There are the necessarily more humorous of the Mighty Diamonds’ “Right Time,” the similarly scholastic ruminations of Culture’s “Ten Seven Clash,” and Burning Spear’s apocalyptic “Maroon Garvey,” a searing invocation of the Rasta sect’s “prophecy” still harmoniously liberating after all these years. But what sets this collection apart is the effort to place the better-known Rasta “gang” in context with the rest of Jamaican music. The fun of the record is an emphasis on the newly domestic market, where people like Donnie Morgan, Alton Ellis, Bob Andy, Dennis Bovels, Johnnie Clarke, Jacob Miller, Ken Boothe (lyrics out “Boerping I Own”), and Gregory Isaacs hold sway—stuff that rarely made it off the island. It’s an exceedingly deep treasure trove, and the box set keeps on coming.

The Jamaicans always held up a funky, funny mirror to outside black-music trends, and at a certain point they forged ahead. Much of American hip-hop, sampling, and rapping included, was at least suggested by Jamaican dance-hall deejay “masters” culture, which first coined with Big Youth in the early 1970s (but “50 Shit” is included here). Not nearly as in-your-face as U.S. rap, but with more echo chambers, it is represented here by a full disc of dance-hall masters like Shabba Ranks, Supercat, and Berrington Levy.

De pressure links these different styles like a common strand of rumor cut. It’s most palpable on the January 1990 ballad “Rasta—Diamond” (Cikini’s “see if you can”) (“I dem a-boss, dem a-shoot, dem a-work in shanty town”), Prince Buster’s “Mi Capone,” Junior Maroon’s magnificent “Rasta and Thieves,” and Leroy Brown’s “Babylon Adieu.”

But then again, de pressure can be found anywhere. Once I was smuggled in Bob Marley’s house. I was on the island to interview him. Already the biggest thing in Jamaica, Bob had forsaken the murderous “dreadnought” slurs for a marching sensation on Hope Road in Kingston. But when you’re generating more capital than half the music industry, friends from the old neighborhood do tend to drop by. Likely it was some of these individuals who jumped me that sunny afternoon, locking me in a closet. They wanted my concert tickets. “Push dem under de door, man,” they shouted, “or we shoot through.” I complied. An hour passed before the door opened, and there stood Bob Marley, smiling a gift of the sun of a snow cone. Hearing my story, Marley nodded gravely. “Be mindful. This is no place you been before.” ■

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Julie Baumgold

And the Meat Goes On...

IT WAS AFTER THE SHOW. Meat Loaf's face was grey and cold. A little ponytail drooped from the window in his cap. It was wet, the way his hair gets after he does his third song and soaks it back. He was wearing sneakers, but Meat Loaf walked on heavy shoes. His wife and one of his teenage daughters were with him, and so were many fans. They were peeling him all over the strands of Madison Square Garden, where he had just performed for twenty thousand people who had come to him in the midst of a blizzard. There were his manager and people from MCA records and PR gals in black clothes. The elevator was going up and down and the doors were opening on nothing.

Meat Loaf was walking up the stair-down escalators, through the cold Panamasa Theater, up through rows of empty seats. The laughs-elevator door opened. It did not look like a place for a party. The train was stopping, as to where the party might be. It was a big train because these days Meat Loaf makes in a million a week, not including his record sales. Meat Loaf put his cold, pale face down on his wife's shoulder and buried himself in her neck for a rather long time. His plump hand, with its gold wedding band, patted her wrist. They were measuring each other and the general atmosphere was that Meat Loaf had gotten used to in the years his star had dimmed.

A blond girl came over to say something about where she thought the party might be.

"Put out that cigarette," said the guard. Meat Loaf looked at it if he needed some hot air fan.

"Meat doesn't drink alcohol," said his wife, Leslie Adley. "It's not a recovery thing, he just doesn't like the taste, never did." The first time he had alcohol he was... Leslie screamed up her pretty face and took the elbow of a woman who had passed out the first time she had had alcohol. But in fact there was a brief time during Meat Loaf's nervous breakdown when he, the son of an

alcoholic, did learn to like the taste of alcohol too much.

"Meat doesn't like you to see him like this," Linda said, meaning lost in Madison Square Garden, a happy guy in sneakers, trying to find the party. Meat Loaf had left his persona down on the stage. There he was, that dramatic, romantic creature who roared out of hell on his motorcycle to search for love in velvet stretch pants and brocade vests with his hair cuffs a flapping, his shirt a hanging, and his hair silly till he sang it wet in his quavery voice. All the words Jim Steinman wrote went and ringing in the empty arena air. I want you/I need you/that there ain't no way I'm ever gonna love you/you don't be talking out of these can't hold... Rich and roll dreams come through... Like a inner before the gates of heaven I'll come crawling on back to you... You took the words right out of my mouth... Life is a lemon and I want my money back... Breathe by the dashboard light... Objects in the rearview mirror may be closer than they seem... I would do anything for love, but I won't do this (this being to screw around)—words that are easy to remember in part because they are repeated so relentlessly.

Momentaneous guys had sat like rocks all over the Garden while little girls were jumping and waving their thin arms like leeches. Meat Loaf had generations of fans twenty (thirty) years apart. He has fans from the old days, when they wanted fir firm offense with an oxygen tank and music. He is a hunk of burning love. He is the holy flapping foot. He is the champion of the beefy guys, and a lot of chubby, hairy fingers were clapping, and fans were shouting up in the air as Meat Loaf charged around the stage. Those big red tail guys roared for another big and tall guy who was passionate and dramatic and came to his knees for them. Meat Loaf was not afraid of showing vulnerability and agonism, not afraid to wear a red chiffon burlesque in a ruffled shirt. He has a new Phantom/Dreadful Beast image. "On a hot summer night we'll offer me his [Joanne] on page 140."



Mr. Loaf: Pouring his heart (and his sweat) out for the fans at Madison Square Garden

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